BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE

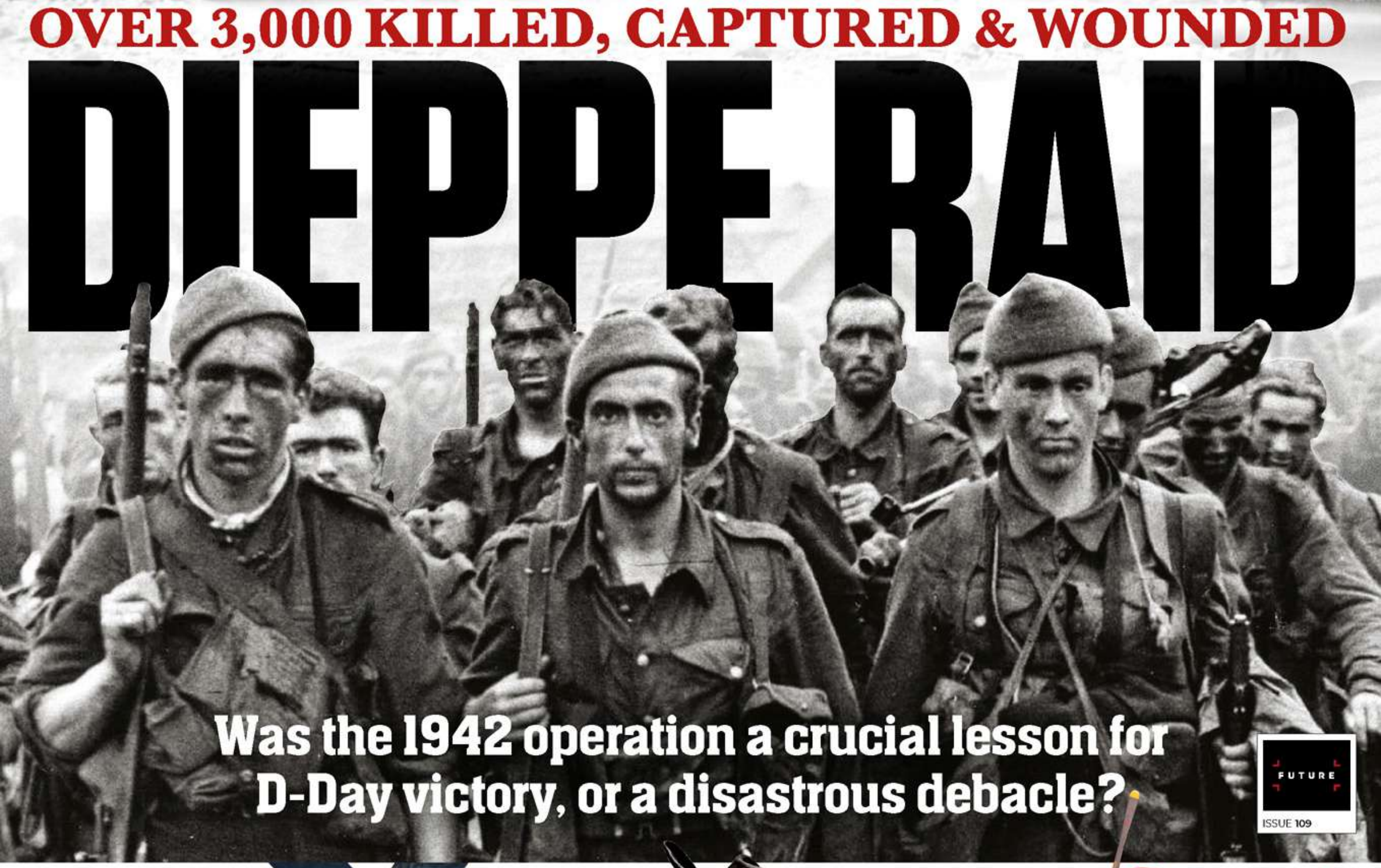
HISTORY of WAR

UKRAINE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

The struggle to break from Soviet control

OVER 3,000 KILLED, CAPTURED & WOUNDED

DIEPPE RAID



Was the 1942 operation a crucial lesson for D-Day victory, or a disastrous debacle?

FUTURE

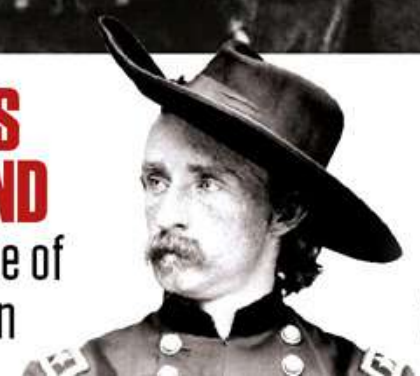
ISSUE 109

SPECIAL FORCES HERO IN 'NAM

Real story of the Ranger who saved an entire platoon

CUSTER'S LAST STAND

Inside the Battle of Little Bighorn



AMERICA'S THUNDERBOLT

Why the P-47 was one of the toughest WWII fighter planes

KING & COUNTRY

UK AUTHORIZED DEALER

Add-On Mortar Ammunition
VN126

VN117
Anzac Mortar Team

SP113
105mm Shells & Spent Cases

VN076
ANZAC 105mm Gun & Crew Set

Vietnam Warriors

During the Vietnam War over 60,000 Australians and New Zealanders fought alongside US and ARVN forces attempting to defend South Vietnam against North Vietnamese and Viet Cong aggression.

Here at King & Country we portray that epic struggle in miniature with our ***1:30 scale, all-metal, hand-painted military figures and fighting vehicles...*** many with a strong Aussie and ANZAC theme.

INFANTRY, ARMOUR & ARTILLERY

For quality, variety and value for money no other military miniature company has produced as many Australians and New Zealanders in action as K&C.

Here you can see a representative selection that includes ***Australian*** infantrymen on patrol as well as **ANZAC** mortar crews and artillery gunners and our very latest Australian Army *M113 Armoured Personnel Carriers.*

Aussie Mine Clearing Set VN101

VN129
Prisoner & Escort

VN063

VN144
M113 APC
'Two Niner Juliet'

VN140
M113 APC
'Two Zero Alpha'

VN062

VN125
3x Aussie Infantry

VN064

VN067

VN030
4-Man Patrol

VN132

VN118
Patrol Land Rover

VN053

VN031

MAGPIE
(MANCHESTER HOUSE) LTD

TO FIND OUT MORE...

About King & Country's *'VIETNAM'* figures and fighting vehicles or any of their other historical series simply contact Britain's ***biggest and best, authorized K&C dealer...***

© 2022 · KING & COUNTRY

KING & COUNTRY HEADQUARTERS
Suite 2301, 23rd Floor, No.3 Lockhart Road,
Wanchai,
Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2861 3450
E-mail: sales@kingandcountry.com

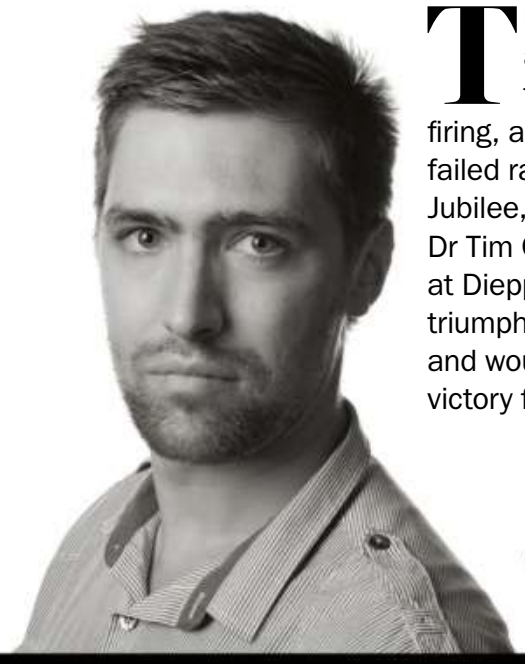
MAGPIE OPENING TIMES
DAILY 9:00AM - 5:30PM
CLOSED WEDNESDAY & SUNDAY

MAGPIE
1 High Street, Evesham
Worcestershire, WR11 4DA. England UK
Tel: 01386 41631
eBay shop: Manchester House Collectables
Email: magpie2500@aol.com

The disastrous Dieppe Raid remains a topic of fierce debate 80 years later

© Alamy

Welcome



The old adage of truth being the first casualty of war is as relevant and apt today as it was decades ago. In fact, that very truth is often the focus of fiery debates many years after the guns have stopped firing, as the clash of words between scholars and historians endures. The failed raid on Hitler's Atlantic Wall in August 1942, dubbed Operation Jubilee, was later chalked up as a valuable dry run for D-Day. However, as Dr Tim Cook of the Canadian War Museum explains this issue, the attack at Dieppe was a tragic disaster, since justified, by some, in light of the triumph on 6 June 1944. In truth, the thousands of men captured, killed and wounded at Dieppe was an horrific blow for the Allies and worse still a victory for Nazi Germany's propaganda machine.

Tim Williamson Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

DR TIM COOK

Dr Cook is the director of research at the Canadian War Museum, and his latest book *The Fight for History* was released in 2020. Starting on page 22 he spoke to Alex Bowers about Canada's fateful role in the Dieppe Raid, and how the battle has been remembered.

HARETH AL BUSTANI

For this issue's Great Battles, Hareth takes a look at Custer's Last Stand at Little Bighorn in 1876. He recounts how the US forces came to blunder so fatally in their pursuit of the tribes, and how the native horsemen were able to surround and defeat them (p40).

ANTHONY TUCKER-JONES

A regular contributor to the magazine, this issue Anthony spoke with **History of War** about his latest book, *Hitler's Winter: The German Battle of the Bulge*, in which he narrates the bloody struggle in the Ardennes during the winter of 1944-5 (p68).

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE!

Take advantage of our fantastic subscription offers and get **History of War** for less than half price!

TURN TO PAGE 48

CONTENTS ISSUE 109

22 Blow-by-blow account of the disastrous Operation Jubilee

DIEPPE RAID

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE

Turn to page 48 for incredible subscription offers

FRONTLINE

12

GRECO-TURKISH WAR

12 TIMELINE
As the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the victorious Allies sought to gain more control over Anatolia

16 SMYRNA LANDING
In 1919 Greek troops seized control of the port city, sparking widespread Turkish resistance

18 GREEK OFFENSIVES
With support from British naval and land forces, the Greek army advanced further into Turkey

20 ATATURK'S TRIUMPH
Led by Kemal Atatürk, Turkish nationalists gradually pushed the Greek army out of Anatolia

60

06 WAR IN FOCUS
Special gallery honouring the 6th Airborne Division

22 DIEPPE RAID
On 19 August 1942, a majority Canadian raiding force attempted to storm the Atlantic Wall

32 NORMAN CONQUESTS
After claiming England, the Norman nobility expanded into Italy and beyond

GREAT BATTLES

40 LITTLE BIGHORN
The shock defeat of Custer's cavalry remains one of the most iconic battles in US history

50 UKRAINE'S WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE
In the shadow of civil war, the fledgling republic attempted to throw off its Russian overlord

HEROES OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

56 ROBERT L HOWARD
Caught in Vietnamese crossfire, this officer fought through shrapnel and bullets to save his men

OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK

60 REPUBLIC P-47D THUNDERBOLT
This rough and ready WWII fighter bomber was so tough it earned the name "Juggernaut"

40

72

67 HOMEFRONT

68 Q&A: ANTHONY TUCKER-JONES
The author discusses his new book *Hitler's Winter*

72 WWII IN PHOTOS
Key WWII events this month, 80 years ago

74 MUSEUMS & EVENTS
A roundup of exhibitions and collections

77 REVIEWS
The latest military history films and books

82 ARTEFACT OF WAR
This rare headpiece is one of the finest examples of Anglo-Saxon armour

WAR in FOCUS

LEAPING INTO ACTION

26 April 1941

British soldiers of 2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment jump from their Universal Carrier during an exercise near Newry in Northern Ireland. During WWII, this Welsh battalion fought extensively in the Normandy Campaign, particularly at the Battles of Caen and Falaise Gap. They went on to liberate Merville in northern France, advanced into the Netherlands and fought at the Battle of the Bulge. The 2nd Monmouths entered Germany on 8 February 1945 and ended their war at Hamburg.

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

THE NIGHT WATCH

Painted 1642

Created by the renowned artist Rembrandt van Rijn, *De Nachtwacht* (*The Night Watch*) is one of the most famous paintings of the Dutch Golden Age. Measuring a colossal 363x467cm, it was commissioned by Captain Frans Banninck Cocq to depict him and over a dozen members of the Kloveniers (musketeers) of Amsterdam's civic guard. The Kloveniers were voluntary militiamen at a time when the burgeoning Dutch Republic was at war with Spain. Cocq is the central figure dressed in black with a red sash.

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

MARILYN VISITS KOREA

February 1954

Marilyn Monroe travelled to South Korea shortly after the end of the Korean War to entertain American troops. A hastily assembled show called *Anything Goes* saw her singing to over 100,000 military personnel over four days. A sailor later recalled: “The sight and sounds of Marilyn singing *Diamonds Are A Girl’s Best Friend* is a memory I still cherish.” Monroe herself described the trip as “the best thing that ever happened to me”.

© Getty

TIMELINE OF...

GRECO-TURKISH WAR

As the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 brought peace to western Europe, resurgent nationalism engulfed the eastern Mediterranean, pitting two historic enemies against each other

MEGALI ON THE MARCH 02

As Allied forces take over portions of the Ottoman homeland, a Greek expedition at least 30,000-strong crosses the Aegean to annex western Anatolia. The campaign proves a success in its first year since the Turkish nationalists can barely muster an army from scratch.

30-31 October 1918 — 15 May 1919 — 19 May 1919 — August-September 1919

The remnants of the Ottoman armed forces were disarmed by late 1918 as British, French and Italian troops occupied the country

ARMISTICE OF MUDROS 01

The armistice between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies is signed aboard the Royal Navy's HMS Agamemnon, anchored off Mudros, bringing an end to the conflict in the region. The ruinous armistice grants the Allies direct control of Constantinople and the Bosporus Strait. Later the Treaty of Sèvres, declared on 10 August 1920, almost partitions Anatolia but it is never ratified.

ENTER MUSTAFA KEMAL PASHA 03

Renowned for his leadership during the Gallipoli campaign, General Mustafa Kemal returns to Samsun, on the Anatolian coast, for a minor assignment as Inspector of the Ninth Army. Although bitter with disappointment after Syria and Palestine were lost to the Allies, news of the Greek invasion and clandestine support from other ex-officers inspires his resolve to join the Nationalist movement.

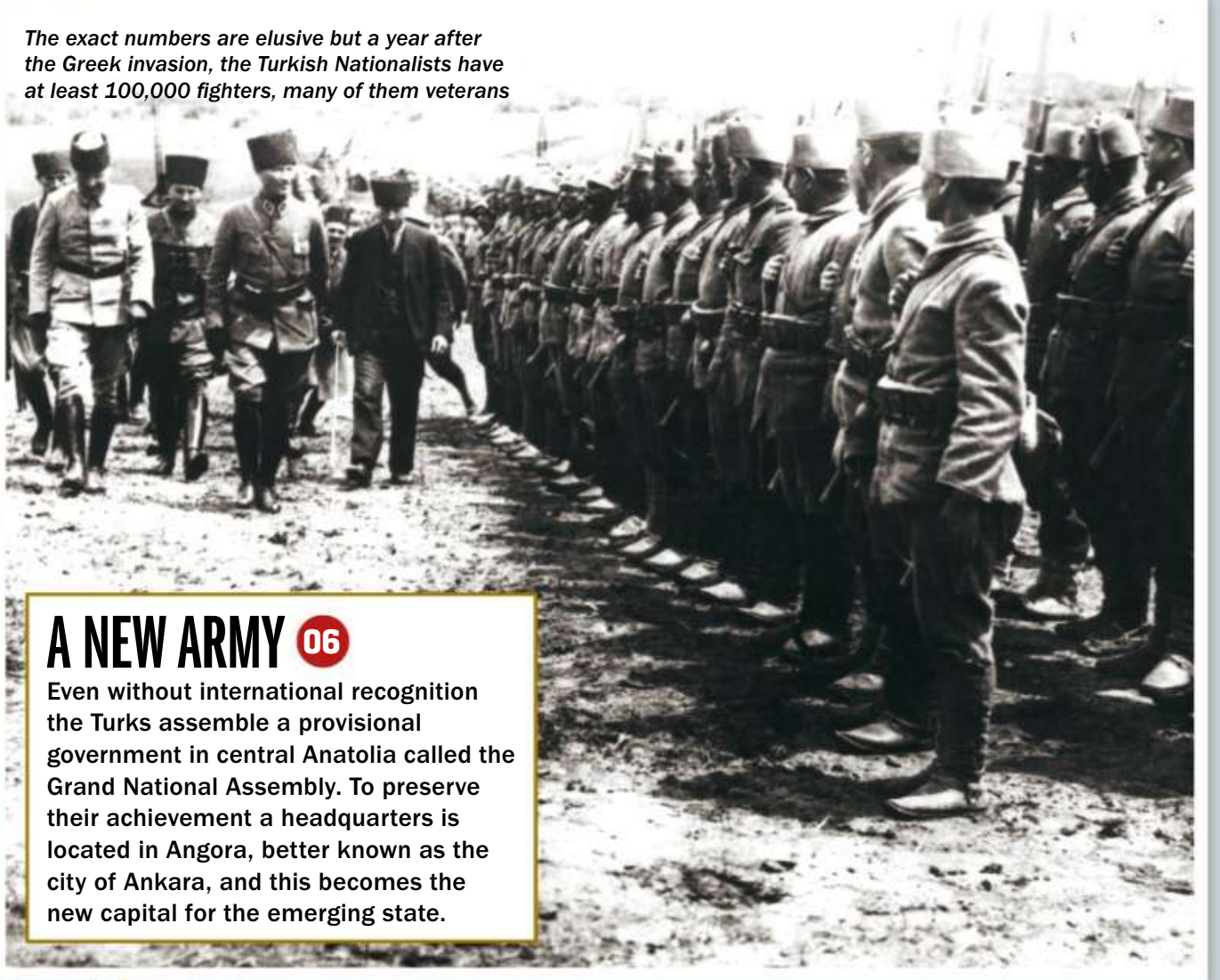
WAR OF INDEPENDENCE BEGINS 04

Repudiated by the anxious Sultan Mehmed VI in Constantinople, the leaderless Nationalists wage a disorderly campaign of arson and reprisals against Armenians and Greeks. Later in the year, soldiers and civil servants meet in Erzurum and then Sivas, where they elect Mustafa Kemal Pasha as their leader.

Thousands of Turkish soldiers, pictured here in 1916, joined the Nationalist cause once it rallied against the Allies

Turkish troops in a trench near Smyrna (Izmir) during the Greek offensive

The exact numbers are elusive but a year after the Greek invasion, the Turkish Nationalists have at least 100,000 fighters, many of them veterans



A NEW ARMY 06

Even without international recognition the Turks assemble a provisional government in central Anatolia called the Grand National Assembly. To preserve their achievement a headquarters is located in Angora, better known as the city of Ankara, and this becomes the new capital for the emerging state.

THE ALLIES STEP OUT 08

As Nationalist resistance grows, despite serious logistical shortages, Mustafa Kemal Pasha's government begins negotiations with the Italian occupation force. This is necessary to alleviate pressure on the Turkish Army which is overstretched along three fronts – against the Greeks, Armenians and the French. The French sign their own treaty with Turkey later the same year.

Italy agrees to withdraw its troops from Anatolia in what becomes the last major conflict between the two countries

16 March 1920 — **23 April 1920** — **June-July 1920** — **13 March 1921**

ALLIES IN COLLUSION 05

Now that the Turkish Nationalists are openly at war with the French and Greek armies in Anatolia, 30,000 British troops pour into Constantinople and abolish the government. This brazen intervention is meant to quash any chance of the teetering Ottoman parliament endorsing the Nationalists' demands for the Allies' complete withdrawal.

British troops photographed marching past Nusretiye Mosque in Constantinople, 1920

RAVAGING ANATOLIA 07

With an estimated 150,000 troops in the theatre and support from Anatolian Greeks who were once subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek invasion captures more territory. By the middle of the year the Hellenic Army on the front line is ever closer to the Nationalist stronghold in Ankara.

Greek troops on the frontline during the campaign, c.1920-22

Images © Alamy, Getty

THE AGE OF ATATÜRK 14

ALLIES IN COLLUSION 05

TURNING POINT AT SAKARYA 10

ENTER ATATÜRK 03

A NEW ARMY 06

ARMISTICE OF MUDROS 01

A NEW ARMISTICE 13

GREEKS CAPTURE ESKISEHIR 09

MEGALI ON THE MARCH 02

THE ALLIES STEP OUT 08

THE SMYRNA EVACUATION 11

FALL OF A KING 12

RAVAGING ANATOLIA 07

July 1921

August-September 1921

GREEKS CAPTURE ESKISEHIR 09

A year into its invasion the Hellenic Army reaches its farthest extent when it captures Eskisehir, 200km west of Ankara, the de facto nationalist capital. Other territorial gains it has made at this point include Adrianople on the European side of the Bosporus.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha inspecting troops in Eskisehir during 1921

TURNING POINT AT SAKARYA 10

Under Mustafa Kemal Pasha's command the Nationalist Army routs the Greeks in a 22-day struggle along the Sakarya River just 80km from Ankara. By 16 September the Turks secure total victory in this engagement and, after a brief pause, continue their offensive into the next year.

***Right:** Mustafa Kemal Pasha pictured in the Sakarya region during the successful campaign against Greek forces*

FALL OF A KING 12

Successive defeats by the Turks and the exodus of Anatolian Greeks take its toll on the Greek ambitions in the region. The Greek monarch Constantine I abdicates under pressure from rebellious army officers and he dies in exile the following year. His counterpart, Sultan Mehmed VI Vahideddin, enters exile on 17 November 1922 and ends the Ottoman imperial court forever.

Constantine I vacated the throne in 1917 until his son King Alexander died of an infection and he assumed power once more in December 1920, with disastrous results

THE AGE OF ATATÜRK 14

The favourable outcome of Lausanne means a new country now exists over what remains of the fallen Ottoman Empire. Upon assuming the presidency, Mustafa Kemal Pasha organises a modern republic that does away with the old imperial regime and embraces secularism, technology and women's emancipation.

***Above:** The Republic Monument in Taksim Square, Istanbul, immortalises Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his commanders during the War of Independence*

TREATY OF LAUSANNE

Having triumphed in the war against Greece, the Nationalists are in a strong position to press their cause at the negotiating table in Switzerland. Once the treaty is signed, Allied troops make a complete withdrawal from the Turkish republic and the country's borders with Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Greece and the Mandate for Syria are firmly set.

Unlike the disappointing armistice in Mudros or the betrayal at Sèvres, the Turkish Nationalists wrung advantageous terms in Switzerland

WAR OF INDEPENDENCE BEGINS 04

THE SMYRNA EVACUATION 11

As the Turkish nationalists push the Greeks out of Anatolia, disaster looms in the coastal city of Smyrna, known today as Izmir. Fearing harsh reprisals, tens of thousands escape by sea and hundreds perish – many Armenians and Greeks follow in the following months.

The fire that broke out in Smyrna during its evacuation left much of the city a charred ruin

A NEW ARMISTICE 13

With the Hellenic Army vanquished, the Turkish Nationalists and Allied commanders meet in Mudanya. The resulting Mudanya Armistice signals an end to all hostilities and the beginning of international recognition for the new republican government in Ankara.

The building where the armistice with the Allies was signed is now a museum

September 1922 — 27 September 1922 — 11 October 1922 — 24 July 1923 — 23 October 1923

Images © Alamy, Getty

SMYRNA LANDING

1919

The regional tension in the wake of the Ottoman defeat broke out into a fresh conflict as Greek forces seized the coastal city and surrounding areas

© Alamy

On 30 October 1918 representatives of the Allies and the Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros aboard HMS Agamemnon in Mudros harbour, ending hostilities between the two sides. Before the ink was dry, the Allies commenced talks on partitioning the Ottoman Empire and a series of agreements led to the Middle East becoming dominated by the Western Powers.

During early 1919 the British were keen to see Greece take control of the Vilayet of Aidin, an Ottoman province in Anatolia. Both the British and the Greeks argued that local Christian populations in the province were under threat from the Turks and sought the backing of the US and France for Greek troops to land and take control of Smyrna (Izmir). By May, Western warships began moving to support a Greek military landing.

The Greek Prime Minister Eleuthérios Venizélos, an ardent Nationalist and fierce proponent of the 'Great Idea' (a revival of the Greek Empire), stoked the situation by telling the Western Powers that the local Ottoman governor of Smyrna, Nureddin Pasha, had been carrying out excesses against non-Muslim inhabitants of the province. According to the minutes of the Allied Supreme Council meetings, the British and Greeks agreed to act to "restore public order and forestall the massacres".

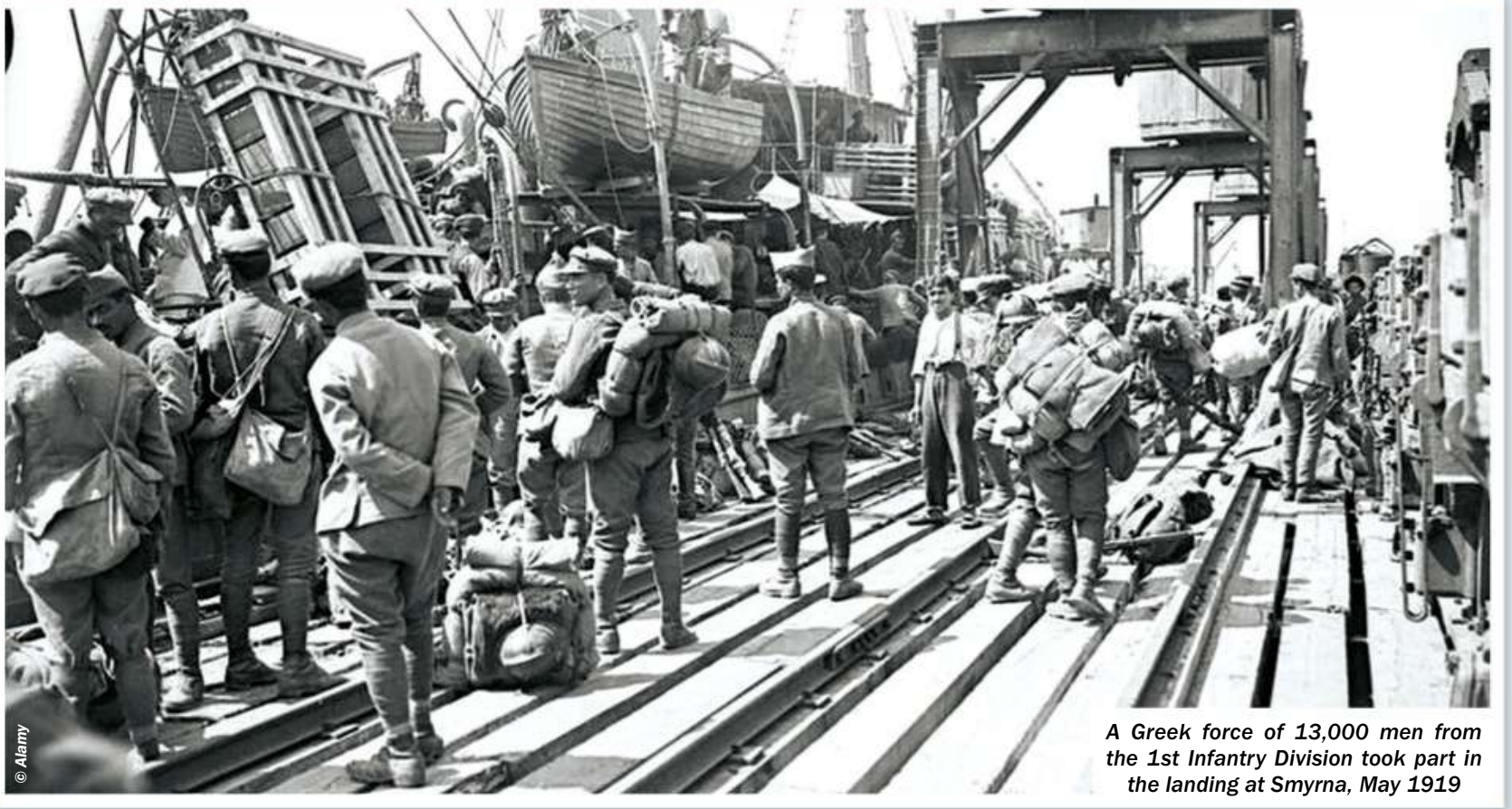
By mid-May, naval and ground forces in theatre consisted of contributions from Britain, the USA, France, Italy and Greece, under the command of British Admiral Somerset Gough-Calthorpe. It was decided that the British would take control of Karaburun and Uzunada, while the French occupied Urla and Foça. Meanwhile, Greek troops were to land at Smyrna.

Greek forces assembled for the landing consisted of 13,000 troops of the 1st Infantry Division under Nikolaos Zafeiriou, who informed his men they were going to "liberate our brethren under alien rule". On 14 May the Greek mission at Smyrna announced that Greek troops would be landing within 24 hours, news greeted with jubilation from Smyrna's Greek inhabitants but protests from its Turkish population.

At 8 am local time the next day the first Greek troops landed and were met by thousands of welcoming Greeks. However,

"SEVERAL WITNESSES WATCHED IN HORROR AS GREEK TROOPS BEGAN BAYONETTING TURKISH SOLDIERS, THE WOUNDED THEN BEING THROWN INTO THE SEA"

Thousands of Greeks welcomed the troops on 15 May 1919, but Smyrna's Turkish inhabitants were far from happy



© Alamy

A Greek force of 13,000 men from the 1st Infantry Division took part in the landing at Smyrna, May 1919

Greek Nationalists accused Smyrna's Ottoman governor of committing atrocities against the province's non-Muslim inhabitants

© Getty

as the Greek troops moved inland the situation turned violent. The Greek 1/38 Evzone Regiment had been marching south when it passed the Ottoman barracks at Konak. As they passed a shot rang out, fired by an unknown Turkish soldier. The Greek soldiers responded by firing at the barracks. This return fire persuaded the Turkish troops to surrender and they were taken prisoner by the Greeks.

As the Turkish prisoners were marched towards the coast for internment, things turned even more violent. Several witnesses watched in horror as Greek troops began bayonetting Turkish soldiers, the wounded then being thrown into the sea. One witness, the British captain of the cruiser HMS Adventure, recalled seeing a Turkish officer struck in the back of his head by a Greek rifle butt before being bayonetted and shot dead.

Disorder continued over the next few days, with some Greek civilians joining in the violence. Turkish shops and homes were looted, and murders and rapes were committed. The Greek military authorities were later criticised for failing to stop the violence committed by their soldiers. According to the subsequent Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry into the Greek Occupation of Smyrna: "It has been proven that soldiers also joined in and that the military authorities took no effective measures to stop the acts of violence and looting until it was too late."

On 21 May Calthorpe departed, and several days later the Greek military unilaterally decided to conduct operations in Aydın and Suhut. The initial move into these areas met with no resistance but days later there was an outbreak of ethnic violence, culminating in the Battle of Aydın (27 June to 4 July). This series of actions fought in and around Aydın would see several quarters of the city destroyed and massacres committed. Nor was the violence perpetrated solely by the Greeks. Turkish mobs took to the streets to avenge their fellow Turks, with Greek civilians murdered, beaten and robbed.

The Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry later established that the Greek military suffered two killed and 20 wounded during the operation, while around 100 Greek civilians were killed or wounded. Turkish military casualties are believed to amount to 40 killed and 60 wounded, while up to 400 Turkish civilians were killed. However, it should be noted that estimates from other sources have the casualty figures higher. Whatever the true numbers, events at Smyrna in 1919 proved a bloody affair.

Smyrna would remain under Greek occupation until 9 September 1922, when Turkish Nationalist troops re-entered the city. Its occupation is viewed as the beginning of the Greco-Turkish War (1919-22), which is considered by Turkey as part of the Turkish War of Independence.

GREEK OFFENSIVES

After the seizure of Smyrna, Greek forces moved further into Anatolia with the aid of their allies

1920-21

Following the initial landings, the Greeks sought to strengthen their position by pushing into surrounding territory. The Hellenic Army of Occupation in Izmir was renamed the Occupation Field Army of Asia Minor in December 1919. The Greeks were supported by the British, who supplied naval, land and air power, and by the Kuvâ-i Inzibâtiyye (Forces of Order), an Ottoman force established to counter the Türk Ulusal Hareketi (Turkish National Movement).

Reinforcements were dispatched to Smyrna, and by May 1920 the Greek force totalled 3,248 officers and 91,063 men. Initial moves were made the same month: the Kuvâ-i Inzibâtiyye attempted to seize Geyve and Izmit but were repelled. Nevertheless, they dug in outside Izmit while British troops acted in support. The following month, Turkish forces attempted to drive back the Kuvâ-i Inzibâtiyye but, in the face of British naval and airpower, failed to do so.

The British and Greeks then planned a new offensive, the latter needing little encouragement to advance into the southern coastal area of the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Region. The Greeks viewed this region as their historical lands.

On 22 June the offensive began, with British and Greek forces capturing a series of towns over the following weeks. However, British and Greek troops encountered stiff resistance from Turkish Nationalists, including at Mudanya, which the British had attempted to capture on the 26th but were forced to withdraw after sustaining casualties. The British eventually took Mudanya on 6 July following a naval bombardment and the landing of troops. On 13 July the British also took Izmit and Gebze.

The Greeks met Turkish resistance at Savastepe, where a small Turkish force managed to delay a Greek division for 24 hours. Nevertheless, the Greeks reached Usak by 29 June, having advanced 200km. By 10 July the Greeks had achieved all their initial objectives and even gone beyond what Prime Minister Eleuthérios Venizélos had thought possible.

"THE GREEK PEOPLE HAD BECOME WAR WEARY AND VIEWED VENIZÉLOS AS THE REASON WAR WAS BEING PROLONGED"

© Getty

Between 24 October and 12 November, Turkish forces launched a series of counterattacks against the Greeks and Kuvâ-i Inzibâtiyye in what became the Battle of the Gediz. Unfortunately for the Turkish irregulars, their gains were limited and the outcome of the battle inconclusive.

Meanwhile, on 10 August the Allies signed the Treaty of Sèvres with the Ottomans at the Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, a porcelain factory in France. The treaty saw swathes of Ottoman territory ceded to Britain, France, Italy and Greece, the latter taking control of Thrace while Turkey was forced to renounce all rights over Imbros and Tenedos. Furthermore, Turkey was to give Greece the 'rights of sovereignty' over Smyrna. Nevertheless, Smyrna technically remained under the sultan with a local parliament, with the option of a plebiscite to be administered by the League of Nations should the people of Smyrna opt to become part of Greece.

By October Greek forces were again, with British encouragement, advancing eastwards into Anatolia. The intention was to inflict a major defeat on Turkish Nationalist forces, the Greek Army holding numerical and technological advantages over the Turks. It was hoped this would force Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (the Turkish Nationalist leader who had defied the Ottoman government by refusing to abide by the Treaty of Sèvres) into negotiations. However, rather than fight a major battle, Turkish forces conducted an orderly withdrawal, thwarting Greek plans. "The Greek columns," as Winston Churchill later wrote in his *The World Crisis*, "trailed along the country roads passing safely through many ugly defiles, and at their approach the Turks, under strong and sagacious leadership, vanished into the recesses of Anatolia."

The Turkish Nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had defied the Ottoman government by refusing to stick to the Treaty of Sèvres

© Alamy

There would be a change in government in Greece following the death of King Alexander in October. The Greek people had become war weary and viewed Venizélos as the reason conflict was being prolonged. The royalist opposition was also pushing for a withdrawal from Asia Minor. Thus, at the next election Venizélos won a minority of seats.

Dimitrios Gounaris emerged as the driving force behind the new royalist governments (although he did not officially become prime minister until March 1921) and a plebiscite was organised for the return of King Constantine. The Allies warned the Greek government that Constantine would be unacceptable to them. Nevertheless, Constantine returned to the Greek throne in December.

Following Constantine's return, many army officers who had been loyal to Venizélos were replaced by less experienced royalist officers. Anastasios Papoulas would be given command of the ongoing campaign, although Constantine remained in overall command of Greek forces. These changes led to dissatisfaction in the Greek Army, with royalists and Venizelists being angrily at odds.

Despite royalist promises of withdrawing from the war, fighting continued. In January 1921, the Greeks launched a new offensive in Anatolia, but by April they were repulsed. The Greeks renewed their offensive in July and were able to advance beyond the Afyonkarahisar-Eskisehir railway toward Ankara. However, they would face defeat at the hands of Atatürk at the Battle of Sakarya in August/September. A long period of stalemate then ensued.

Greek infantry in the trenches, September 1921

ATATÜRK'S TRIUMPH

The last major action of the Greco-Turkish War resulted in a Turkish victory – but the suffering was far from over for civilians on both sides

Following their defeat at Sakarya, the Greeks withdrew to form a new 700km defensive line stretching from Izmit to Eskisehir to Kara Hisâr-ı Sahib. Although much of the ground over which the line ran was considered defensible, the Greek line of supply consisted of only a single-track railway running from Kara Hisâr to Dumlupınar then on to Smyrna. In addition to this fragile supply line the Greek lines of communication from Smyrna to positions along the frontline were poor. The morale of Greek troops also began to suffer from remaining on the defensive following a defeat.

Meanwhile, the Allies sought an armistice, but Kemal Atatürk felt his Turkish Nationalists had the military advantage and showed little interest in talks. Atatürk was working to reorganise and rearm his army with assistance from Soviet Russia, who wanted the withdrawal of the Western Powers from the Caucasus and Turkey. He intended to conduct a major offensive against the Greeks in the hope of achieving final victory. There would also be a change in command of Greek forces in Asia Minor, with Georgios Hatzianestis replacing Anastasios Papoulas, the latter of whom had openly disagreed with the Greek government over the direction of the war. As the Greeks grew weaker, the Turkish Nationalists appeared to be growing stronger.

The basic Turkish plan was for their First Army to launch an attack against Greek forces south-west of Kara Hisâr, while their Second Army attacked Greek forces to the west of Kara Hisâr. Their primary objective would be to sever the vulnerable Greek railway line between Smyrna and Kara Hisâr and between Kara

"SENIOR GREEK OFFICERS AT SMYRNA HAD LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING DUE TO THE LOSS OF COMMUNICATIONS"

Greek infantry mount a charge during fighting around the Gediz River

© Alamy

Hisâr and Eskisehir. Once this was complete, both armies were to meet up to the south of Kütahya, effectively encircling Greek forces in and around Kara Hisâr.

On the night of the 25/26 August 1922 the Turkish Nationalists launched their 'Great Offensive'. Over the next 24 hours, Turkish troops overran Greek positions and cut the railway lines. They also cut the telegraph lines to Smyrna, effectively destroying all communications from Greek headquarters to their frontlines. Of note was the Turkish artillery, which opened with a heavy bombardment and silenced the lighter Greek batteries. Turkish artillery also caused heavy casualties among the Greek infantry sheltering in poorly prepared trenches. The bombardment was followed by a large-scale infantry assault.

As the Greek frontline strained under the pressure of the Turkish assault, senior Greek officers at Smyrna had little understanding of what was happening due to the loss of communications. This resulted in confused orders and a lack of an effective response to the fast-developing Turkish offensive.

In the early hours of the second day of the offensive the Turkish artillery again unleased a heavy bombardment of Greek positions, which was followed up with renewed infantry assaults. By 9am Turkish troops had managed to break through the Greek line, and less than two hours later Greek forces began a withdrawal, including the evacuation of Kara Hisâr. Due to communication issues, some Greek troops held their positions for longer but eventually withdrew later in the day.

The Battle of Dumlupınar, as it became known, dragged on until 30 August. It would be the last major action of the Greco-Turkish War and ended in Turkish victory. Nevertheless, more fighting on a smaller scale followed, with Eskisehir being captured by Turkish Nationalists on 2 September. The Greeks now sought an armistice, via the British, in the hope they might retain a presence in Smyrna. Again, Atatürk refused and continued his advance against the Greeks. Over the next few days, more towns and cities fell to Turkish forces, including Balıkesir and Bilecik (6 September), Aydın (7 September), Manisa (8 September) and Gemlik and Mudanya (11 September).

On 8/9 September leading elements of the Turkish Nationalist forces entered Smyrna, but the Greek military had already evacuated the city. Despite Atatürk's promise to execute any Turkish soldiers who committed atrocities against Greek and Armenian civilians a number of such killings and other abuses did occur, including the burning of the Greek and Armenian quarters of the city, in what became known as the Burning of Smyrna or the Great Fire of Smyrna.

The Armistice of Mudanya was signed on 11 October 1922 and was followed by the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on 24 July 1923. Under the terms of the treaty, Greece was obliged to relent on its claim to Smyrna as well as return eastern Thrace and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos to Turkey. Both Greece and Turkey also controversially agreed to exchange their respective minority populations, with around 2 million people forced from their homelands.

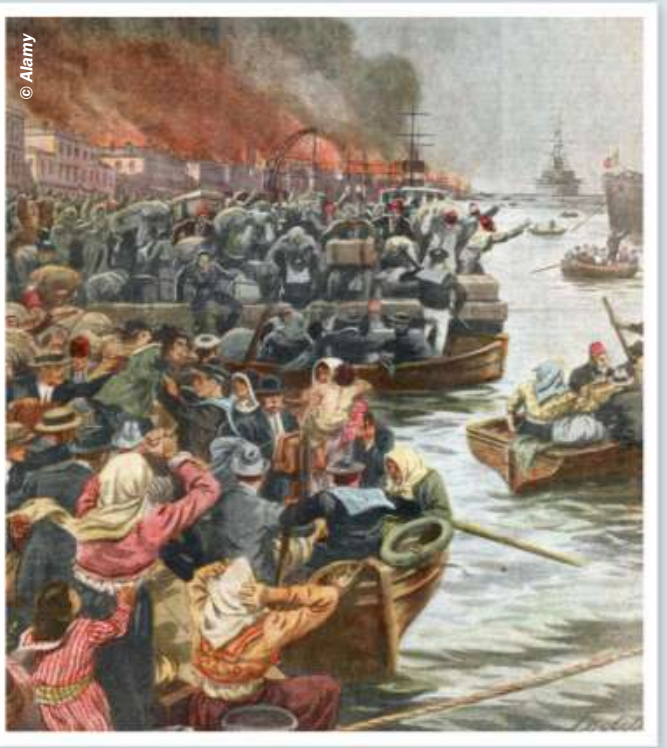
***Bottom, left:** Turkish troops encamped near Smyrna, September 1922. By this point in the conflict their Greek foes were on the verge of capitulation*

***Bottom, right:** Ignoring Atatürk's threats to execute any of his troops who committed atrocities, Turkish forces burned the Greek and Armenian quarters of Smyrna*

***Below:** Turks in Ankara celebrate their victory at Smyrna and the end of major hostilities between the sides, leading to the armistice of October 1922*

© Getty

© Getty


© Alamy

This image, taken by a German photographer for propaganda purposes, has haunted Canadians for decades

CANADA'S NINE HOURS IN HELL

DIEPPE RAID

In August 1942 an Allied force made up largely of Canadian soldiers raided the French seaport of Dieppe, with disastrous consequences

WORDS **ALEX BOWERS**

Mountbatten (left) and Montgomery (right), pictured here in 1944, were both involved in the Dieppe Raid

Mountbatten (seated) with his staff Major-General JC Haydon and Air Marshal James Robb at the Combined Operations Headquarters

The Dieppe Raid took place on 19 August 1942 during one of the darkest periods for the Allies. Organised by Vice-Admiral Lord Mountbatten and his staff at Combined Operations Headquarters (COHQ), a predominantly Canadian force landed at the German-held seaport of Dieppe tasked with occupying the French coastal commune, destroying fortifications, damaging harbour facilities and gathering enemy intelligence – all within a few hours.

A series of blunders, including a gross underestimation of the German defences, a failure to take the enemy by surprise and issues navigating the terrain led to what is today perceived as a debacle. The Allies suffered over 3,000 casualties, most of whom were Canadian. Both sides nevertheless spun it as a victory in what became a propaganda war, and the raid remains a topic of considerable debate among veterans and historians.

"HOPING TO RELIEVE PRESSURE ON THE EASTERN FRONT, SOVIET LEADER JOSEPH STALIN PLEADED WITH HIS BRITISH AND AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS TO OPEN THE SO-CALLED SECOND FRONT IN THE WEST"

The summer of 1942 was a dark time for the Allies. In the Far East, the Japanese had dealt several blows against the British and Commonwealth forces. Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union, the German invasion of Russia under Operation Barbarossa had cost tens of thousands of lives. Hoping to relieve pressure on the Eastern Front, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin pleaded with his British and American counterparts to open the so-called Second Front in the west.

The Dieppe Raid was the first time US soldiers had engaged German ground troops in Europe since 1918

All images © Alamy

"Churchill desperately needed to placate Stalin," says Dr Tim Cook, chief historian and director of research at the Canadian War Museum and author of *The Necessary War, Volume 1: Canadians Fighting The Second World War: 1939-1943*. Calls had likewise been made by the United States for an early invasion of the continent. These demands resulted in the British prime minister approaching Mountbatten, commander of COHQ, to request a series of escalating raids against German-occupied Europe.

PLANNING THE RAID

Initially codenamed Operation Rutter, COHQ planners intended for the Dieppe Raid – then set for July 1942 – to be its largest assault yet. The bulk of the force expected to land at the French port would be Canadian, alongside small contingents of British and American special forces, and with air and naval support. However, poor weather and an air raid on the troop ships led to the operation's cancellation.

Mountbatten subsequently revived the plan under Operation Jubilee, set for August 1942. He ordered the raid to be conducted against the same target and with the same 2nd Canadian Division soldiers storming the beaches. With air and naval support scaled back from Rutter, the objectives remained to occupy Dieppe, wreak havoc on enemy infrastructure and obtain intelligence.

The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and the Essex Scottish, accompanied by Churchill tanks of the Calgary Regiment and other support units, would land immediately in front of Dieppe. They would be supported on the flanks by the Royal Regiment of Canada and the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment), who would take the village of Puys to the north. At the same time, the South Saskatchewan Regiment and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada would claim the village of Pourville to the south. The plan for both southern and northern attacks was to disable guns overlooking the main beach. On the far flanks, British commandos were to destroy coastal battery positions that would have a clear view of Allied vessels. In reserve were the French-Canadian Fusiliers Mont-Royal (FMR), ready to capitalise on the day's successes, followed by a secret reserve of British Royal Marines who would capture documents or codes for the German Enigma machine.

"WHILE CANADIANS HUDDLED UP AGAINST THE SEAWALL FOR PROTECTION, MORTAR SHELLS HURLED STEEL FRAGMENTS AND STONE SPLINTERS INTO BELEAGUERED GROUPS OF MEN"

BRITISH COMMANDOS ON THE FAR FLANKS

In the early hours of 19 August, Allied vessels en route to Dieppe encountered a small German convoy and a firefight broke out. This unexpected engagement alerted the German land defences, especially at Puys and near the British objectives at Berneval. Despite little progress in the attack on the coastal battery close to Berneval, where only a limited number of special forces reached their assigned targets, the assault on the other flank around Varengeville proved to be one of the day's few successes.

A short distance from the Canadians' Pourville objectives, No.4 Commando under commanding officer Lord Lovat knocked out their assigned battery, preventing it from raking Allied shipping from the south. They were then able to withdraw, although by that point the Canadian assault was well underway.

ATTACK ON PUYS AT BLUE BEACH

The Royal Regiment of Canada and the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) committed their forces towards Puys by storming the codenamed Blue Beach, a narrow strip of land surrounded by high chalk cliffs and protected by well-positioned enemy machine-gun nests. Additionally, a wire-laden seawall blocked access off the beach. Three waves would attempt to breach these defences, take Puys and silence opposition that could threaten the main assault happening half an hour later on the beaches in front of Dieppe.

The first wave of landing craft drifted off course, arriving late when dawn was breaking and visibility favoured the enemy. Such was the immense firestorm that met the

© Alamy

© Getty

© Getty

© Alamy

© Alamy

***Above:** An artistic impression of the Dieppe Raid*

© Getty

***Left, from right to left:** German soldiers examine one of the Churchill tanks left behind on the beaches*

The raid was the single most costly day for the Canadian Army in World War II

Soldiers are rescued from the water after their landing craft sunk. Others trapped on the beaches resorted to stripping down and swimming

Personnel landing craft draw away from a motor torpedo boat to start their run-in to the beaches during the raid on Dieppe

The operation's planners failed to take into account Dieppe's shingle and how it might affect tank tracks

DIEPPE RAID

Despite the failure of Dieppe, Canada's outstanding contribution to the war included the Battle of the Atlantic, the liberation of Italy, D-Day and the Scheldt Campaign

"SOME CANADIANS WHO WERE UNABLE TO ESCAPE ONTO THE VESSELS RESORTED TO STRIPPING DOWN AND SWIMMING – MANY OF THEM WERE KILLED BY SNIPERS OR BOMBS DROPPED BY GERMAN AIRCRAFT"

© Alamy

© Getty

German photographers took several iconic images to serve the Axis propaganda machine. Some were air-dropped onto Canadian camps in England to damage morale

invading force that those who survived the immediate onslaught had little choice but to press themselves against the seawall. With next to no hope of advancing further, the second wave struggled to leave their craft as dozens died before even putting boots on the ground. The third wave, comprising Black Watch personnel, continued with the attack but was also unable to overcome the seawall, machine guns and mortars.

ATTACK ON POURVILLE AT GREEN BEACH

Codenamed Green Beach, the South Saskatchewan Regiment and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada fared better than their comrades on Blue Beach. However, a sizeable part of the force was landed on the wrong side of the River Scie, furthest from Dieppe. Crossing the river would mean taking a heavily defended bridge. This was achieved – albeit at a high cost of casualties – when the South Sasks' commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Merritt, encouraged his men forward and reached the other side.

Those who had been landed on the right side of the Scie in the first place had succeeded in driving the enemy out of Pourville. They had then advanced into the hills but were eventually pushed back by German reinforcements. Unable to dislodge the enemy from the high ground, a methodical retreat was later ordered. It was here that one of the most fundamental flaws in the

Germany's 302nd Infantry Division was ready for battle on 19 August, a day that Axis authorities had singled out as favourable for an Allied assault

© Alamy

plan became clear, as Dr Cook explains: "How are [the Canadians] supposed to get off the beaches when contact is made with counterattacking forces? You don't have to be a general to look at that and go, well, how would the Canadians have disengaged?"

A sacrificial force of about 250 men – led by Merritt – decided to stay back and protect the remaining personnel who would evacuate from Green Beach. Almost evenly split between the two regiments, their defensive actions saved the lives of hundreds before the survivors were forced to surrender. Merritt was taken prisoner and would be awarded the Victoria Cross for his performance of duty throughout the operation (See *History of War* issue 108 *Heroes of the Victoria Cross*).

MAIN ASSAULT ON RED AND WHITE BEACHES

On Red and White Beaches, directly in front of Dieppe, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and the Essex Scottish were largely unaware of the numerous failures on the flanks and as a result were in a precarious position from the start. Since the men at Puys had been checked on Blue Beach and the raiders at Pourville hadn't gained command of the high ground, the guns overlooking the main landing were intact. The limited naval and aerial support had attempted to silence the firepower, but their efforts had only a minimal influence.

Another seawall covered in barbed wire, similar to the one near Puys, stood in the way of the assaulting forces. While Canadians huddled up against it for protection, mortar shells crashed down, hurling steel fragments and stone splinters into beleaguered groups of men. The Calgary Regiment (14th Canadian Army Tank Battalion) arrived about 15 minutes late. At that point, the Germans could see them coming and bombarded a number of tank-laden landing craft before they had reached the beach. The Churchill tanks that did make it ashore found the shingle difficult to navigate as stones got caught between treads and, in some instances, disabled tracks. Even the armour that remained mobile could not punch through to the town because of concrete barriers around the promenade. The hope had been that the Royal Engineers would remove any obstacles for the Calgary Regiment earlier, but they had been killed, wounded or pinned down.

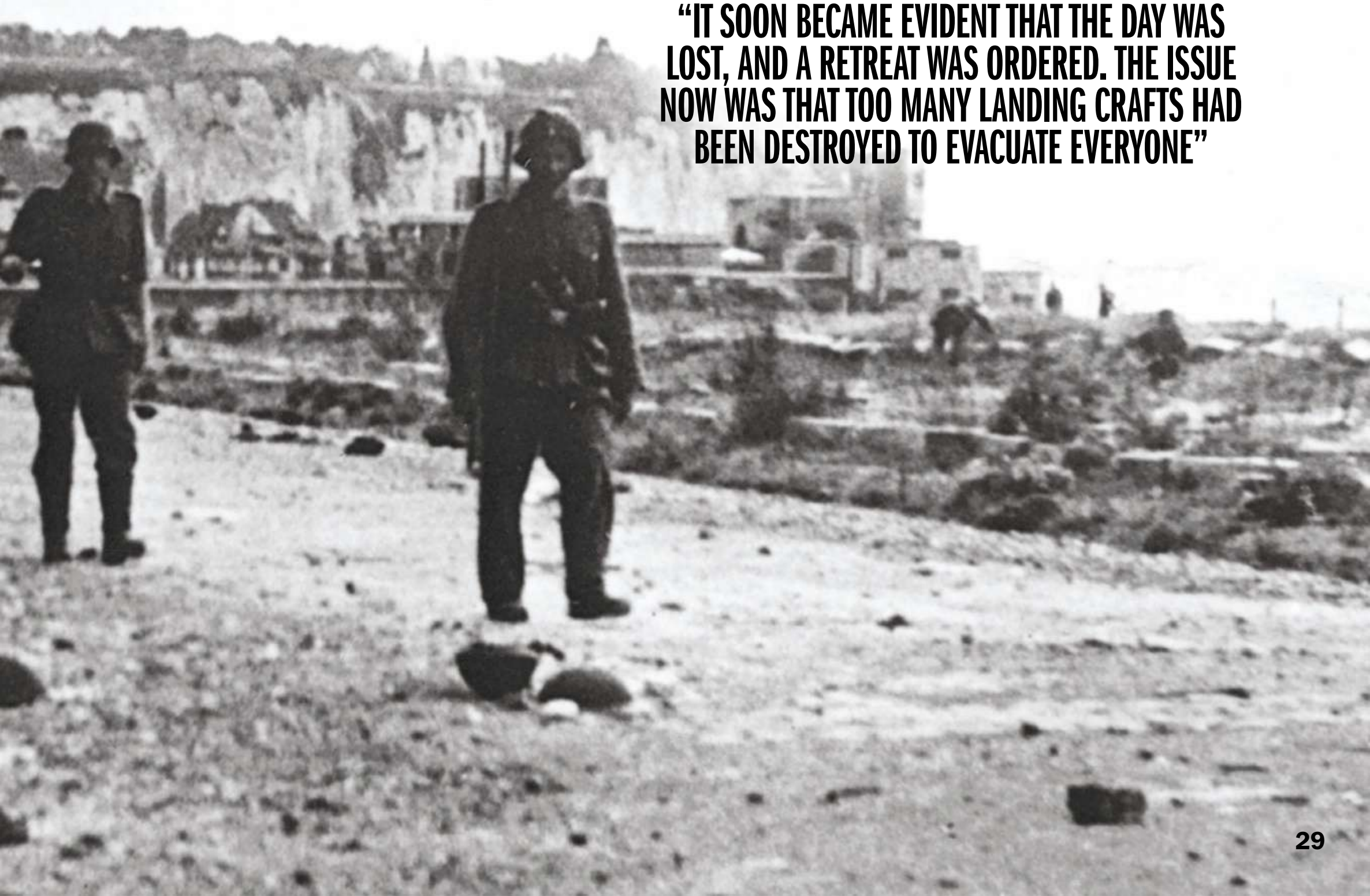
Receiving garbled transmissions aboard HMS Calpe stationed off-shore, Major-General J Hamilton 'Ham' Roberts, the land force commander overseeing the operation, misinterpreted a communique that to him suggested that the Essex Scottish had made progress into the town of Dieppe. In reality, a small party had moved ahead, but their exploits had been magnified. Roberts, who intended to bolster what he deemed to be a turning tide, sent in the reserve Fusiliers Mont-Royal to penetrate into the commune and salvage the mission. The French-Canadians would suffer high casualties alongside their Anglophone comrades.

It soon became evident that the day was lost, and a retreat was ordered. The issue now was that too many landing crafts had been destroyed to evacuate everyone. Some Canadians who were unable to escape onto the vessels resorted to stripping down and swimming, and many of them were killed by snipers or bombs dropped by German aircraft. The ones left behind on the beaches surrendered by the early afternoon. The Dieppe raid was over.

IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH AND CASUALTIES

The nine hours of combat that constituted the Dieppe Raid had seen the 2nd Canadian Division suffer 907 killed (including those who would succumb to their injuries after the assault or die in captivity), 586 wounded, and almost 2,000 taken prisoner. This was in addition to hundreds of British and American special forces, naval personnel, aircrew and French civilians who collectively lost their lives. Burnt-out tanks were left on the beaches, a total of 106 RAF and RCAF aircraft were brought down above the skies of Dieppe, and one destroyer – HMS Berkeley – was sunk.

"The day of the operation and the day after, Mountbatten's headquarters was sending out communiques saying that this was a successful raid… and we know that's simply not true," says Dr Cook. The merits and justifications for Operation Jubilee have been hotly debated ever since.



"IT SOON BECAME EVIDENT THAT THE DAY WAS LOST, AND A RETREAT WAS ORDERED. THE ISSUE NOW WAS THAT TOO MANY LANDING CRAFTS HAD BEEN DESTROYED TO EVACUATE EVERYONE"

LESSONS LEARNED?

Treated by the Combined Operations Headquarters as a dress rehearsal for D-Day, were the so-called 'lessons learned' worth the sacrifices at Dieppe?

Two years and 14 days after the Dieppe raid – 1 September 1944 – the first group of men from the 2nd Canadian Division entered the town. The lead reconnaissance unit had prepared for gunfire, but instead they encountered crowds of cheering people thronging the streets. "There's an operation that's going to bring in heavy bombers," says Dr Cook. "They're going to saturate-bomb [Dieppe]. And at the last moment… a Canadian scout who goes in and sees the Germans have fled… they call off this operation. And wouldn't that have been a bit of a different story — if the Canadians were waiting on the outskirts about to attack, guns ablaze, artillery smashing, tanks hurling shells, and with this massive carpet bombing of several hundred heavy bombers? That didn't happen. And thank goodness."

The Germans had indeed left and, two days later, on 3 September, the 2nd Canadian Division – having been welcomed back as liberators – held a ceremony to honour those who had come before them on 19 August 1942. It was perhaps a bittersweet moment to pay tribute to the 765 graves, 582 of them Canadian, that lay about 4km from Dieppe, especially since so few of the raid's veterans were present, their lives lost on the road from Caen to Falaise after the success of D-Day months earlier. But in the eyes of Lord Mountbatten, the sacrifices made during the Dieppe raid had not been in vain. According to Mountbatten and the propaganda that immediately followed Operation Jubilee, it had in fact been a valuable lesson learned that ensured victory for the Normandy landings.

Dr Cook explains: "Mountbatten… was always a champion of this notion that Dieppe had been costly, but… paved the way for D-Day. And I think there is no straight line between them. We know that the planners for D-Day… did look at Dieppe and they did understand the failures. And there were tangible lessons: you don't attack a fortified port, you do need to throw in support, you do need combined arms – especially aerial and naval gunfire – you do need to prepare for the counterattack that's coming, you do need secrecy. All of these we see as failures for the most part at Dieppe and successes for the most part on D-Day.

"But that doesn't mean that one leads directly to the other, because there were so many other amphibious operations: Sicily, Italy, the Americans in the Pacific Campaign… that were being absorbed. However, I would not go as far as to say that there is no link between the two. The bloody failure of Dieppe was a spectre that worried everyone. It was a spectre that haunted the planners because Dieppe ultimately was a fairly minor operation, around 6,000 soldiers. D-Day was going to be 20-times that. And if it had been the same sort of reversal and largely an annihilation of the forces, that would have been catastrophic. Sometimes the most important lessons are those to show you how *not* to do something. But that's different than saying Dieppe paved the way for D-Day."

Mountbatten, alongside several other members of Allied High Command, maintained the claimed links between the 1942 raid and D-Day long after the war. "As early as 1948… and I think until his death… [Mountbatten] said he wouldn't have made any different choices. And certainly I don't think that stands up to any sort of scrutiny," says Dr Cook.

But harder still was understanding where the Dieppe Raid stood in the collective Canadian consciousness, as it remains even today. Dr Cook, whose recent book *The Fight for History: 75 Years of Forgetting, Remembering, and Remaking Canada's Second World War* examines Canada's shifting perception of the conflict, says: "Dieppe has always been front-and-centre with [the First World War's] Vimy Ridge as the two battles that come to mind for most Canadians… I always found it interesting that in the First World War we picked really a significant tactical victory… It's really difficult to turn Dieppe into a victory… This one day, the 19th of August 1942, seemed to have overshadowed six years of massive contribution in the Battle of the Atlantic… the 100,000 Canadians who fought in the Italian Campaign… the Scheldt Campaign… But nobody knows about that in Canada. And yet it's Dieppe. And you have to acknowledge somewhere that Dieppe has haunted Canadians, and it has shaped the way we think about the war".

A total of 1,946 Canadians were captured. Many prisoners of war endured a long road to recovery after sustaining injuries during the operation

© Getty

Upon the discovery of dead German prisoners on the beaches with their hands tied, Allied POWs from the raid were manacled in a tit-for-tat escalation

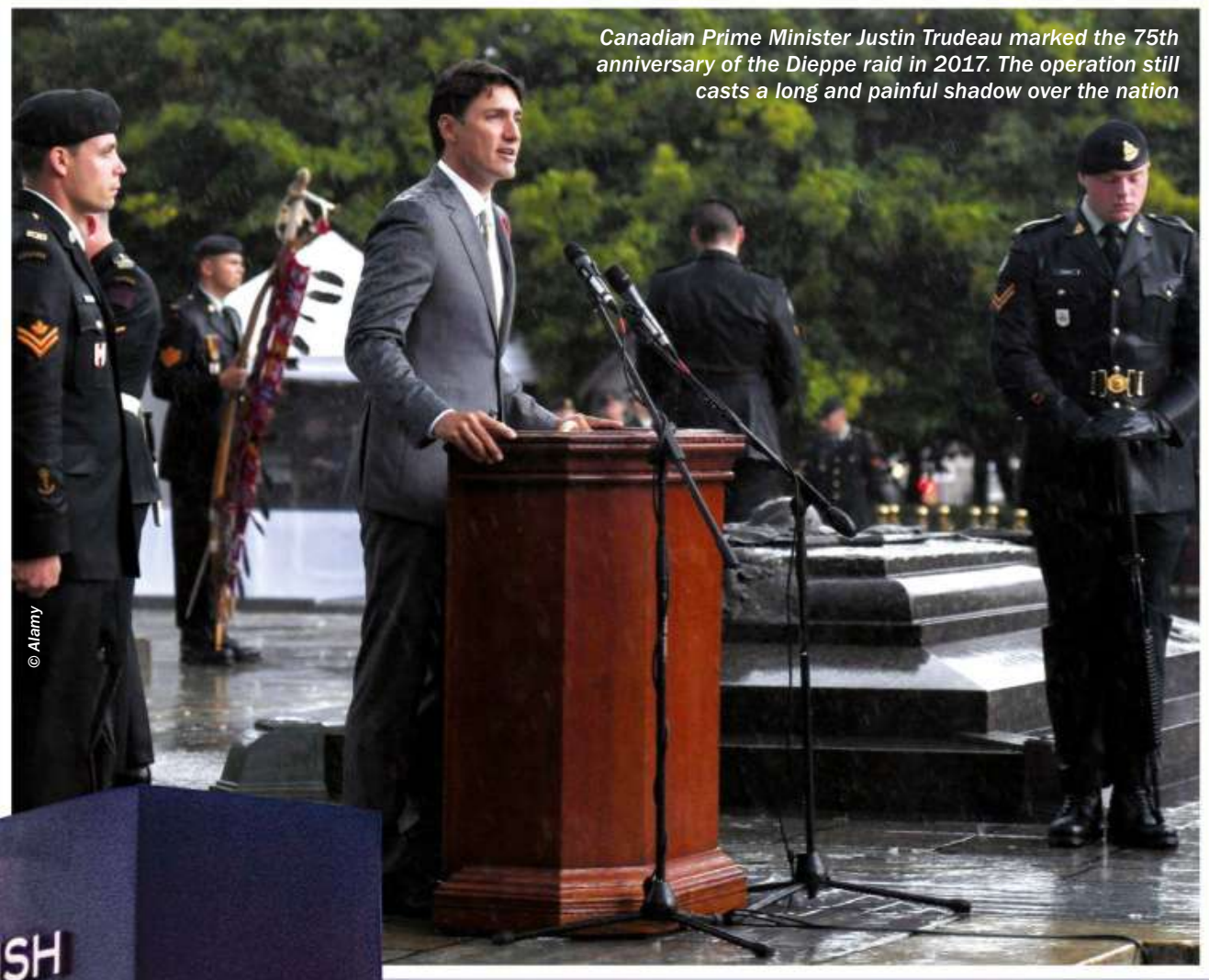
© Getty

© Alamy

Yet Dr Cook believes this might have started to change: "The only caveat to that is I would suggest that maybe over the last 20 years Dieppe has sunk a little bit down and D-Day has risen a bit in public consciousness; the understanding that Canadians landed on Juno Beach, that [they] were part of this great crusade – as Eisenhower called it – that was the British, the Americans and the Canadians in a very bloody and difficult day, but ultimately the beginning of the end of the German forces in Western Europe. And the key ingredient here is that when we built the Juno Beach Centre, right from 2003 onwards, that's an important museum, but it's also a memorial… And it tells the Canadian story. The argument – at least in my book *The Fight for History* – is that the creation of these memorials and monuments, or lack thereof, do shape memory and how we think about places."

The Juno Beach Centre, which is currently hosting an exhibition on the Dieppe Raid and its connections to D-Day until December 2023, is a tangible reminder of Canada's outstanding role in the ultimate Allied victory. Nevertheless, the debated notion of 'lessons learned' from the defeat at Dieppe will likely endure for generations. "We continually try to scratch at the surface, trying to make sense of this thing," says Dr Cook, "because I guess in the end we just can't accept that it was a badly planned raid without the proper support. It really didn't have much of a chance of succeeding. That isn't enough for us."

This memorial at Dieppe marks where the Essex Scottish landed on 'Red Beach'


© Alamy

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau marked the 75th anniversary of the Dieppe raid in 2017. The operation still casts a long and painful shadow over the nation

© Getty

Above: *Mountbatten (left) greets Dieppe Raid veteran Bill Stevens (right) and his son Christopher. The commander behind the raid would maintain it was a vital lesson learned*

Dr Tim Cook is currently Director of Research at the Canadian War Museum, and the author of *The Fight for History: 75 Years of Forgetting, Remembering, and Remaking Canada's Second World War* (Penguin, 2020).

"DIEPPE HAS ALWAYS BEEN FRONT-AND-CENTRE WITH [THE FIRST WORLD WAR'S] VIMY RIDGE AS THE TWO BATTLES THAT COME TO MIND FOR MOST CANADIANS"

William the Conqueror reviews his troops before invading England

© Alamy

NORMAN CONQUESTS

The fearsome knights of Normandy did not stop at the successful invasion of England: they forged a dynasty that changed the face of Europe

WORDS MARTIN WALL

One date is indelibly seared into English memory: 1066. Even those with little interest in or knowledge of history know enough about that fateful year to recall the crucial incidents, portrayed with such skill and attention to detail in the *Bayeux Tapestry*. Following the death of King Edward 'The Confessor' on 5 January, Harold became king amid controversy over a promise that Edward had made to William of Normandy for him to inherit his kingdom. The Normans prepared to invade, but were prevented from leaving their harbours by foul weather. It was then that the Viking army unexpectedly attacked, led by King Harald Hardrada of Norway and Godwinson's brother, Tostig. They were defeated by Harold at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.

All these events and Harold's dash south to confront William at the Battle of Hastings are well known. But who were these Normans? How did they achieve one of the most thorough military occupations in history, utterly overwhelming a population of nearly 2 million with an army which likely never exceeded 15,000 men? Were the Anglo-Saxons and their Anglo-Danish neighbours so corrupt and weak that they relinquished their liberty within the space of a few brief years? Or were the Normans simply so ruthless that their invasion proved irresistible? Perhaps most important of all, how did the Normans manage to take such an iron grip on the country that the institutions they bequeathed to us have remained in many cases intact, so that England has never fallen again to a foreign conqueror during almost a millennium which has elapsed since? The Normans were a truly extraordinary people, a force too powerful for the divided and senescent Anglo-Saxon state to repel.

England had been conquered before. After almost four decades of continual Danish raiding and extortion, the regime of the discredited and weak King Æthelred 'the Unready' was overthrown in 1013. He was restored a few months later following the sudden death of King Sweyn 'Forkbeard' of Denmark. Sweyn had compelled the submission of the English nobility before his collapse at the beginning of February 1014, just before he was to be crowned as the English king. Æthelred finally died in April 1016, to be succeeded by his son, Edmund II, 'Ironside'. Sweyn's second son, Cnut, eventually prevailed in the war and power struggles of 1016, and England became the fulcrum of an Anglo-Scandinavian empire, which incorporated Denmark and Norway. Cnut even attempted to invade Sweden, utilising English soldiers, but failed. His two sons, Harold 'Harefoot' and Harthacnut succeeded in their turn, but their reigns were brief and turbulent and neither man left an heir.

"THE NORMANS WERE A TRULY EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE, A FORCE TOO POWERFUL FOR THE DIVIDED AND SENESCENT ANGLO-SAXON STATE TO REPEL"

So it was that on Easter Day 1043 the royal house of Wessex was restored. It was the so-called 'Cerdicings' – a resurrection not just of Christ but of the hallowed English monarchy – in the shape of Æthelred's eldest son, Edward, by Emma of Normandy, his second wife. He had been in exile, mainly in Normandy, his mother's homeland, for almost 30 years, and was a virtual stranger in his own country. When Emma, Æthelred's dowager, was approached to return as queen consort to Cnut in 1017, she had willingly accepted his offer, abandoning her three other children and leaving them in the care of trusted abbots and her powerful Norman kinsmen. This cold-blooded decision was due to her concern to keep her other children out of harm's way. Cnut, despite his later lionisation by the Church, was a cruel and sometimes sadistic Viking ruler. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* hints that Edward felt betrayed by his mother and never forgave her. His reputation as a godly and devout man – willing to forego the pleasures of his wife's bedchamber and endanger his kingdom by leaving no heirs rather than engage in 'carnal sin' – makes us forget, perhaps, that Edward's relations with women may have been undermined by his deep mistrust of his own mother.

Edward's long and gruelling struggle to hold his kingdom together and preserve his crown from the ambitions of the rapacious Godwin family drained his energies. Unwilling or unable to produce children, he sent Bishop

The Bayeux Tapestry depicting Harold's foot soldiers during battle

The making of the Norman troops

How did the powerful army become one of the most unstoppable forces that history has ever seen?

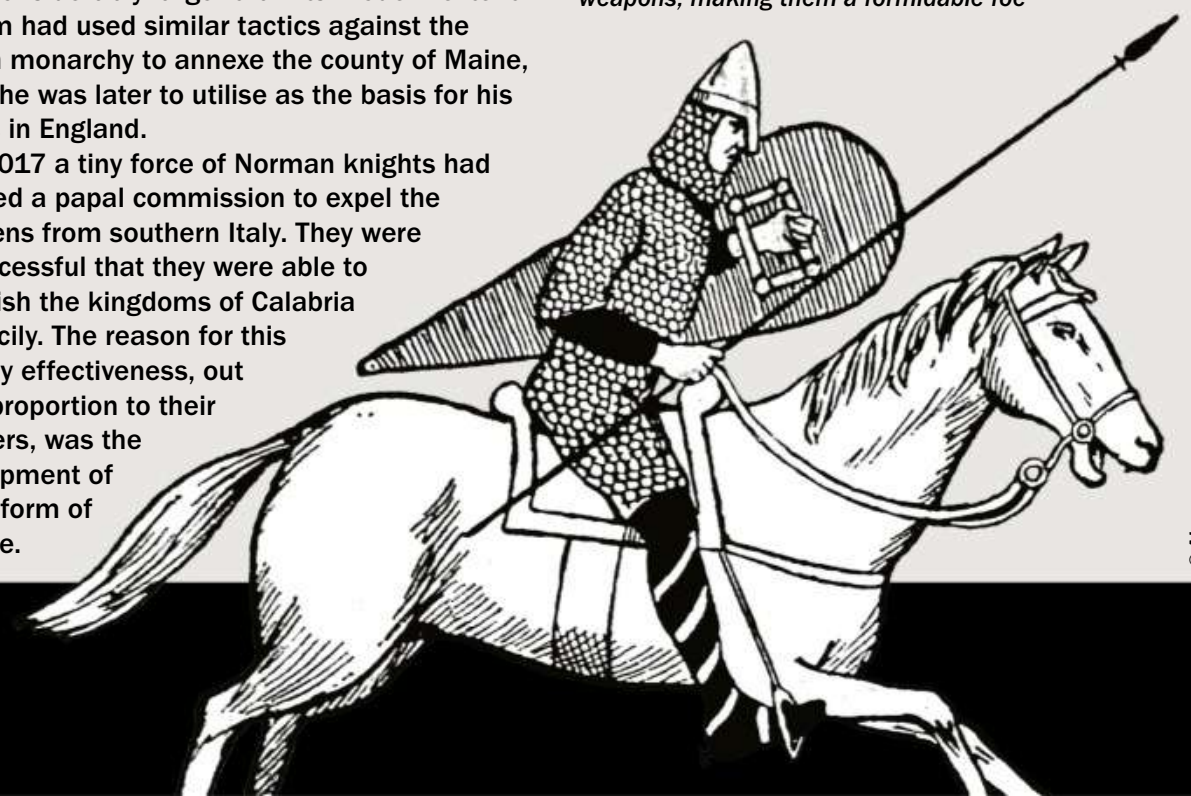
In some ways the Duchy of Normandy was a simulacrum of the Danelaw in England, the area which had fallen under Danish control. The Normans were similar to Vikings, and had been granted the dukedom in 911 when Charles 'the Simple', the king of France, had come to an accommodation with a Norwegian adventurer called Rollo, who was granted lands around Rouen. As a condition of the settlement Rollo had been baptised and all his followers with him.

The Norman Vikings had become devout Christians. Within a few generations they had adopted the French language as their own, and had co-mingled with the native population. Just as in England, their actual numbers were small and they were primarily a military feudal aristocracy ruling over a Norman duchy, which grew considerably larger than its modern extent. William had used similar tactics against the French monarchy to annexe the county of Maine, which he was later to utilise as the basis for his claims in England.

In 1017 a tiny force of Norman knights had received a papal commission to expel the Saracens from southern Italy. They were so successful that they were able to establish the kingdoms of Calabria and Sicily. The reason for this military effectiveness, out of all proportion to their numbers, was the development of a new form of warfare.

The Normans had adopted cavalry as their main arm, a tightly knit group of elite warriors trained from boyhood to ride mighty stallions that were trained to bite and kick enemy infantrymen. The knights wore an expensive one-piece chain mail 'coat', or 'hauberk', which covered most of the head and extended down to just above the knee; the horses were sometimes mailed too. A kite-shaped shield and a conical helmet were also worn, and the main offensive weapons were a long lance or javelin, and a sword for close-quarter combat. Norman knights wore their hair short, shaved the back of their heads, and cultivated a strict code of manly and austere military conduct.

Highly trained Norman knights used cavalry and chain mail, together with long- and short-range weapons, making them a formidable foe



© Alamy

Ealdred of Worcester on a foreign expedition to find the son of Edmund Ironside, Edward 'the Exile', and repatriate him. He returned in 1057 and the Confessor planned to endorse him as heir, but the exile died, leaving a young son, Edgar 'the Ætheling', with an impeccable claim. As he was only a minor, he was unlikely to withstand the powerful claims of mighty warriors such as Harald Hardrada of Norway or William of Normandy.

As the Confessor entered his final years, troubled and anxious about Welsh wars and northern rebellions, he began to entrust Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex, with more responsibility. William alleged that he had extracted a sacred oath from Harold when he had been shipwrecked near the Norman coast, to uphold William's right of succession after Edward's death. This claim may well have been invented retrospectively, intruded as a device to justify the Norman expedition against England. We will probably never know for sure, but if such an oath was made, it can only have been secured under false pretences. William heard the news that Harold had been selected as king while he was out hunting. Immediately his face turned black with rage, and the furious vengeance of such a man was not something to be lightly provoked.

The long-haired, moustache-wearing Anglo-Saxon warriors were looked down on as effete and effeminate by the Normans. This contempt for their conquered foes, and their designation as inferior – the 'Englishry' and the 'Welshry' – was a corollary of their own perception of themselves as a superior race, with a God-given right to rule. Inherent in the code of chivalry was control.

In *The Romance Of Lancelot* the skill and control of the horseman is analogous to the

© Alamy

“THIS SUPREME ARROGANCE, THE HAUGHTY SELF-ASSURANCE AND ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WERE DIVINELY SELECTED TO RULE WAS THE KEY TO THEIR EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENTS”

exercise of political power: “For above the people must sit the knight. And just as one controls a horse and he who sits above it leads it where he will, so the knight must lead the people at his will.” This supreme arrogance, the haughty self-assurance and absolute confidence that they were divinely selected to rule was the key to their extraordinary achievements. Orderic Vitalis, their own chronicler, describes them as “a warlike race moved by fierce ambition to lord it over others” and “men of extreme arrogance and presumption”. Great Norman families such as Montgomery, Beaumont, Warrene and FitzOsbern were tightly knit and often bound by ties of marriage, but for the supreme enterprise against England even these powerful warrior families looked to their lord, William, as the ultimate authority – a man with a traumatic history, a cruel reputation and a telling sobriquet: William ‘the Bastard’.

He was indeed, illegitimate. Robert, his father, had been Duke of Normandy, and one day as he was fording a stream he noticed a girl washing her linen and seduced her. The girl was Herleve, the daughter of the local tanner, an occupation which was looked down upon by all levels of society. It involved gruesome and smelly processes using urine and dog excrement, and tanners were obliged to intermarry because the stench permeated their clothing and their skin. Nevertheless, William was the apple of his father’s eye. When Robert died to be succeeded as duke by his bastard son in 1035, the succession of a seven-year-old illegitimate boy whose mother was from the lowest stratum of society was never going to be secure.

Guarded by faithful henchmen who had been set to watch over him by his father, William’s boyhood was spent in constant flight from one hiding place to the next, constantly in fear of intrigue and assassination. The experience marked him. He was tempestuous, easily offended, violent and paranoid, whose abiding motivation was to grasp on to and hold tight control of what was rightfully his. In 1057 his precocious military skill had enabled him to see off a French invasion, by which time he had established himself as the foremost military commander of the day, but there was a less savoury aspect to his reputation.

© Alamy

***Left:** A depiction of William the Conqueror’s wife, Matilda, painted by Herbert Norris*

Building a future

What made the Norman fortresses so formidable that they remained undefeated for a millennia?

The Normans carefully chose prominent heights as good vantage points from which to overlook the conquered populace. Any previously existing buildings or settlements were ruthlessly demolished. The proliferation of these fortifications came about because William did not trust his subordinates to hold down large contiguous areas in case their domains became centres for rebellion against him by powerful barons. Instead the estates were given out in small parcels, widely dispersed, each requiring its own castle and garrison. The task of actually building the castles fell to the miserable and resentful local population, and the harsh and callous attitude of the Normans was plain enough, even though they could speak no English. The Norman aristocracy refused to speak the native language for 300 years.

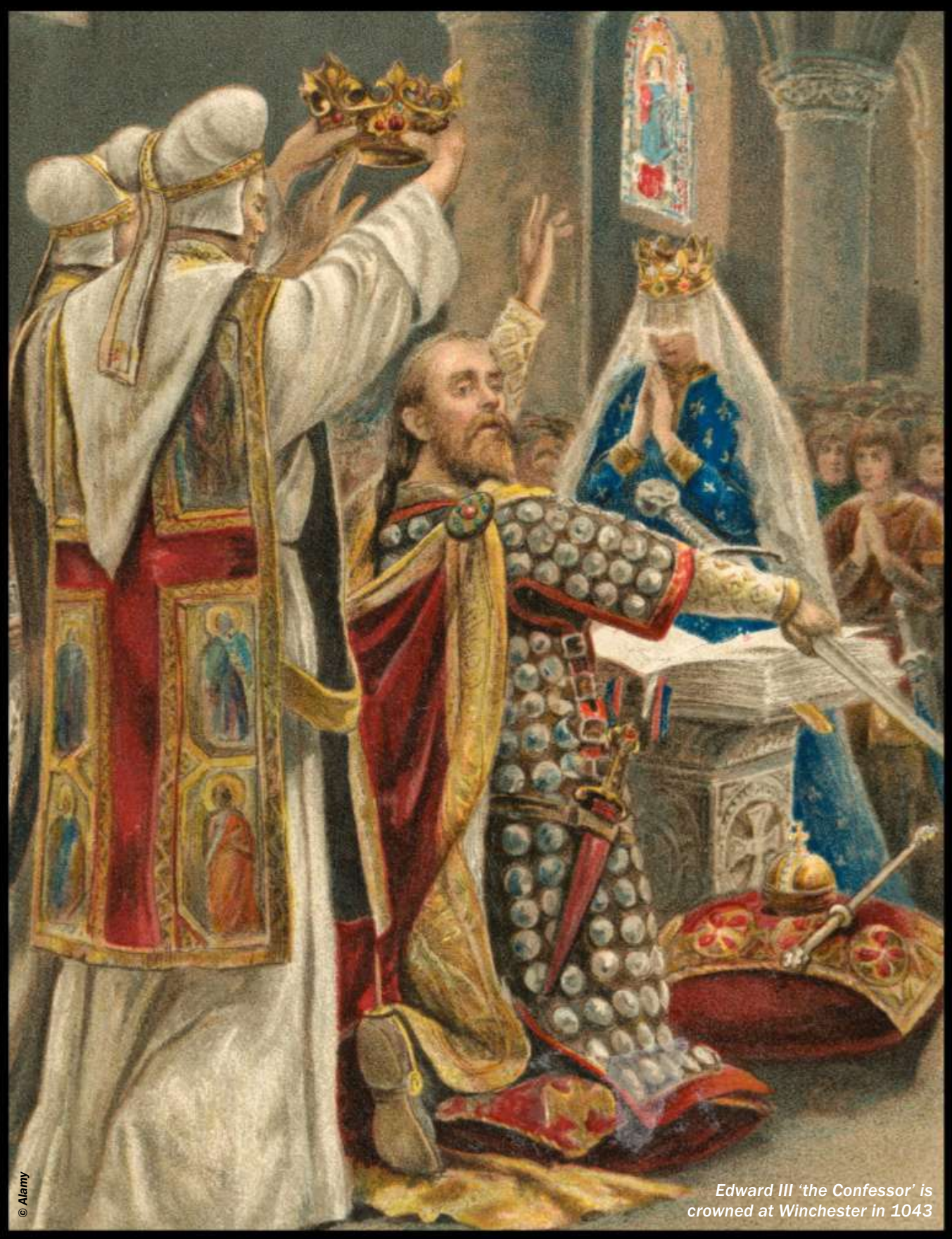
At first these castles were fairly primitive but effective timber-built constructions. A timber hall would be built atop a motte, a steep-sided hillock, with a palisaded outer-area called a bailey containing the stables, cook-houses, smithies, kennels and even a chapel in later years. The central hall atop the motte was the nobleman's personal residence where his family lived. A well was sunk below the motte, for drinking and also because of the risk of fire, but within a few decades these timber and earth castles had been replaced by the mighty Norman stone castles which still stand today.

William ordered the construction of the 'White Tower' of the Tower of London as early as 1075 to ensure the compliance of the citizens of London, with construction starting on fortresses in Colchester, Chepstow and Richmond as early as 1067. Much of the stone to construct these incredible castles was imported by sea from Normandy itself, a physical statement of the subordination of England that surely must have overawed the demoralised and defeated Anglo-Saxons.

Image: Wiki / PD / Snapshots Of The Past

© Alamy

What remains of the gatehouse at Tynemouth Castle, the fortress of Harold's brother Tostig

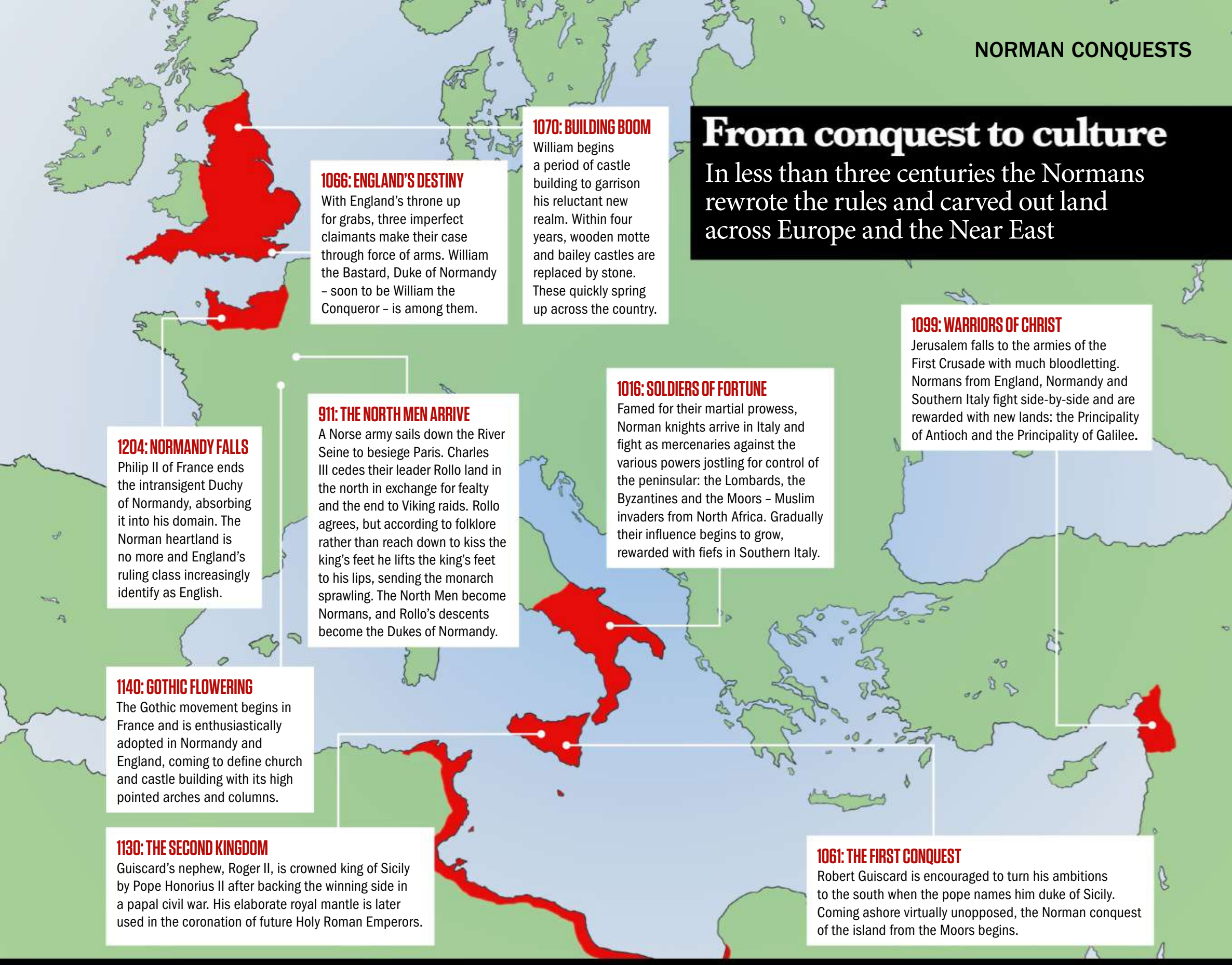


© Alamy

Edward III 'the Confessor' is crowned at Winchester in 1043

From conquest to culture

In less than three centuries the Normans rewrote the rules and carved out land across Europe and the Near East


1066: ENGLAND'S DESTINY
With England's throne up for grabs, three imperfect claimants make their case through force of arms. William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy – soon to be William the Conqueror – is among them.
1070: BUILDING BOOM
William begins a period of castle building to garrison his reluctant new realm. Within four years, wooden motte and bailey castles are replaced by stone. These quickly spring up across the country.
1204: NORMANDY FALLS
Philip II of France ends the intransigent Duchy of Normandy, absorbing it into his domain. The Norman heartland is no more and England's ruling class increasingly identify as English.
911: THE NORTH MEN ARRIVE
A Norse army sails down the River Seine to besiege Paris. Charles III cedes their leader Rollo land in the north in exchange for fealty and the end to Viking raids. Rollo agrees, but according to folklore rather than reach down to kiss the king's feet he lifts the king's feet to his lips, sending the monarch sprawling. The North Men become Normans, and Rollo's descents become the Dukes of Normandy.
1016: SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE
Famed for their martial prowess, Norman knights arrive in Italy and fight as mercenaries against the various powers jostling for control of the peninsular: the Lombards, the Byzantines and the Moors – Muslim invaders from North Africa. Gradually their influence begins to grow, rewarded with fiefs in Southern Italy.
1099: WARRIORS OF CHRIST
Jerusalem falls to the armies of the First Crusade with much bloodletting. Normans from England, Normandy and Southern Italy fight side-by-side and are rewarded with new lands: the Principality of Antioch and the Principality of Galilee.
1140: GOTHIC FLOWERING
The Gothic movement begins in France and is enthusiastically adopted in Normandy and England, coming to define church and castle building with its high pointed arches and columns.
1130: THE SECOND KINGDOM
Guiscard's nephew, Roger II, is crowned king of Sicily by Pope Honorius II after backing the winning side in a papal civil war. His elaborate royal mantle is later used in the coronation of future Holy Roman Emperors.
1061: THE FIRST CONQUEST
Robert Guiscard is encouraged to turn his ambitions to the south when the pope names him duke of Sicily. Coming ashore virtually unopposed, the Norman conquest of the island from the Moors begins.

During one of the many sieges of rebel towns the citizens of one town had mocked William by hanging tanner's hides over the battlements and beating them, shouting, "Hides for the tanner's bastard!" When the town finally fell, William ordered that the hands and feet of the population should be chopped off. This extreme brutality was to find its apogee in William's appalling 'war crime' of 1069-70, the so-called 'Harrying of the North', during which over 100,000 inhabitants of Yorkshire and Durham were exterminated as a result of his depredations. This was the nature of the man Harold had allegedly provoked, but a full-scale invasion of England was a daunting prospect nevertheless.

Yet there was a comparatively recent precedent – Sweyn Forkbeard's ruthless conquest of 1013 – and the Normans were the descendants of Viking seafarers. With the blessing of the papacy, William enlisted the knighthood not just of Normandy but of Brittany, Flanders and various French regions. The huge fleet, consisting of some warships but many more large transports for horses and supplies, assembled at Dives-sur-Mer. The difficulties of transporting the frightened and fearsome stallions – thousands of them – on a rough sea-crossing must have been significant. It has been supposed that pre-fabricated fortifications were taken aboard, too, an example of the meticulous planning that had gone into William's operation. William's own flagship, the Mora, was a gift from his formidable wife, Matilda. She had a personal grudge against the English. As a young girl she had become infatuated by Brictric, an English nobleman from Worcestershire. He had rejected her advances but Matilda had never forgotten him nor forgiven. As soon as William had been crowned she sent orders for Brictric to be arrested and cast into a dungeon, where he later died.

In mid-September, the very winds from the north that had prevented William's fleet from setting sail facilitated the invasion of King Harald Hardrada, a gigantic Viking adventurer, alongside Harold Godwinson's embittered brother, Tostig. They disembarked at Riccall in Yorkshire with 10,000 experienced warriors. The local Anglo-Saxon earls fought the Vikings at Gate Fulford outside York, and were heavily defeated. York, which had a long tradition of welcoming Scandinavian rulers, promised to deliver hostages and supplies to Hardrada at a crossing on the River Derwent called Stamford Bridge. By one of the most incredible forced-marches in military history, Harold II of England managed to march his army from Sussex to Tadcaster in Yorkshire in five days.

On 25 September, Harold assaulted the Vikings and utterly destroyed them, one of the most spectacular victories in Anglo-Saxon history. But it was to be their last. Only three days later, William's army finally landed at Pevensey Bay in Sussex. The news was conveyed with all speed to Harold, who heard it as his troops were revelling in the victory, feasting to celebrate Stamford Bridge. Harold immediately set out for the south. Sussex was his home territory and his personal estates would doubtless be the first targets for Norman raiding. As expected, William ordered a deliberate policy of arson and depredations

"HAROLD ASSAULTED THE VIKINGS AND UTTERLY DESTROYED THEM"

© Alamy

Left: An impression of the seal of William the Conqueror

Edward III the Confessor on his deathbed on 5 January 1066

"A HARD MAN WAS THE KING... SUNK IN GREED AND AVARICE... MAY ALMIGHTY GOD SHOW MERCY ON HIS SOUL"

in the areas that were the king of England's personal fiefs.

Harold reached London with his elite household troops and rested them for four days while frantic messages were sent out to the ealdormen and shire-reeves of the southern shires to send their troops as quickly as possible to "the hoar-apple tree" atop Caldbec Hill, about 13km north of Hastings. Harold knew the terrain and had probably earmarked the position as one which was easily defensible. Most medieval battles were quite brief, decisive affairs, but at Hastings the fighting went on for nine hours. The English valiantly resisted the onslaught from the Norman troops, some of whom were using the revolutionary crossbow. One of their arrows struck Harold and he was targeted by four Norman knights, who cut him to pieces. William set up his tent among the corpses and toasted his victory with wine from Champagne. Once he had received reinforcements from Normandy he made efforts to isolate London.

On Christmas Day 1066, William was crowned as king of England at Westminster Abbey, while outside in the streets Norman soldiers attacked onlookers and torched buildings, thinking the mob had gathered to prevent the coronation. William swore to "so well govern this nation as any king before him best did, if they (the English) would be faithful to him". William had been crowned at last, but it would take some years for the Normans to establish firm control of the country.

Initially there was a respite for the English. William returned to Normandy to visit his delighted wife, leaving the country in the care of two trusted lieutenants, his half-brother, Odo, in the south, and his dependable friend, William FitzOsbern, in the north. The estates of the Anglo-Saxon nobles who had fallen at Hastings – and there were perhaps thousands of them – were parcelled out as rewards to William's foremost commanders, many of them close relations and faithful retainers. But the Norman presence was tiny, and rebellion soon broke out, first on the Welsh Marches led by a resistance leader called Eadric 'the Wild'. Soon there was a rebellion at Exeter led by Harold's mother and his illegitimate sons. William put down this latter rising on his return but simultaneously a huge insurrection engulfed Yorkshire and Durham.

By laying waste to the entire region during the harshest winter for a century, William succeeded in liquidating over 100,000 people and all their livestock, destroying their ploughs and ruining their seed-corn. The north of England was simply referred to as "waste" when the Domesday assessors visited 20 years later. Following the rebellion there was a ruthless purge of the English church, and by 1075 only one English bishop remained. William claimed overlordship of all England, but in practice there was a tight group of less than a dozen men who controlled the entire country. The entire Norman feudal apparatus was controlled by less than 200 men.

By 1071 only Hereward 'the Wake' continued to defy William in the fens around Ely, and eventually even this famous guerrilla fighter surrendered. Now William was free to stamp his authority on the conquered nation, in the shape of massive castles and huge Romanesque churches – visible demonstrations of his power. Many of the surviving Anglo-Saxon nobility fled rather than do homage to William. Some escaped to Scotland and Ireland, while other more adventurous souls fled as far as Scandinavia and even as far afield as Byzantium, where they enlisted in the Varangian Guard to the emperor as mercenaries. Such a wholesale subjugation of an ancient culture could not have been achieved unless it had been planned and executed by a brutal and determined man, with no scruples as to how he ensured the obedience of his new subjects.

The chronicler's record of the grim ordeal reads: "King William ceased not to lay waste the land, to murder the inhabitants, and to inflict numerous injuries on them." Large tracts of England were afforested so that William and his compatriots could enjoy the favourite Norman pastime of hunting. A chronicler wrote that William "loved the high-deer as if he were their father". His attitude to his despised English subjects was less humane, and when William finally died in September 1087 it is said that he prayed to be forgiven for all the cruelty he had inflicted upon them.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* pulls no punches: "A hard man was the king… sunk in greed and avarice… may Almighty God show mercy on his soul, and pardon him his sins." William had been a force of nature, and the Norman Conquest was an ineluctable fact, but they would not be satisfied with conquering England. Within a few years Wales, Scotland and Ireland were to become targets for their rapacious expansionism, and William's descendants would eventually establish the extensive Angevin Empire.

FURTHER READING

- T Rowley, *The Normans*, The History Press 2009
- P Rex, *1066: A New History Of The Norman Conquest*, Amberley 2009
- F McLynn, *1066 The Year Of Three Battles*, Pimilco 1999
- D Bates, *William The Conqueror*, Tempus 2004

Advertisement

Could you save on your household bills?

If you're looking for an easy way to save money on your household bills, what better way than to compare prices and policies with GoCompare.

From car insurance and home insurance, to travel insurance and broadband, you can compare quotes for over 40 products. Now that's something to sing and dance about.

GoCompare

History Of War and GoCompare.com are both Future Plc brands

LITTLE BIGHORN RIVER, BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA 25 JUNE 1876

Great Battles

LITTLE BIGHORN

One of the most significant events of the American Indian Wars, the clash in Montana saw a coalition of Northern Plains Indians successfully defend their way of life against a US Army attack

WORDS **HARETH AL BUSTANI**

© Alamy

In 1876, after violating an earlier peace treaty with the Plains Indians, the United States Army sent a force to the Midwest to conquer the increasing number of nomadic natives who did not want to live on designated reservations.

The ensuing conflict culminated in the Battle of Little Bighorn, where the US soldiers, under the leadership of Civil War veteran General George Armstrong Custer, were overwhelmed and killed down to the last man. A spectacular loss for the US Army and a stunning win for the combined Lakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, the battle remains one of the most significant events of the wider Sioux Wars.

The battle was part of an ongoing series of hostilities triggered by relentless white American expansion westwards through indigenous ancestral lands. With most Native Americans either dead or forced onto reservations, after centuries of abuse the Great Plains Indians were the last remaining nomadic communities left.

However, their victory at Little Bighorn proved a double-edged sword: the decisive win over Custer's men only strengthened the United States' resolve. Utilising their greater resources and firepower, within a year the US Army would force the remaining Native Americans to surrender, taking the Black Hills by force and without any compensation.

From civil war to conquest of the west

When the American Civil War broke out in 1861, white settler expansion to the west ground to a halt, allowing the Great Plains Indians a period of reprieve. By this point, through warfare and over-hunting, white settlers had either killed off most natives or forced them to abandon their nomadic lifestyles for life on the reservations. The one last bastion of freedom spanned the Northern Great Plains of Dakota and Wyoming, where the Sioux and Cheyenne tribes had been forced by western expansion, in turn displacing the local Crow tribes.

During the Civil War a gold rush broke out in Montana, leading to the development of a trail straight through the Sioux hunting grounds. By 1866, the US Army had erected three forts in the region, sparking a war with a confederation of warrior bands led by the charismatic Oglala Sioux chief, Red Cloud.

Assisted by other leaders such as Crazy Horse and Rain in the Face, Red Cloud emerged victorious; he negotiated a peace treaty that awarded the Sioux and Cheyenne the western half of modern South Dakota as a permanent reservation, stretching all the way to the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming. While half of these tribes settled in reservations, drawing

'Custer's Last Stand' at the Battle of Little Bighorn has become a notorious part of American folklore

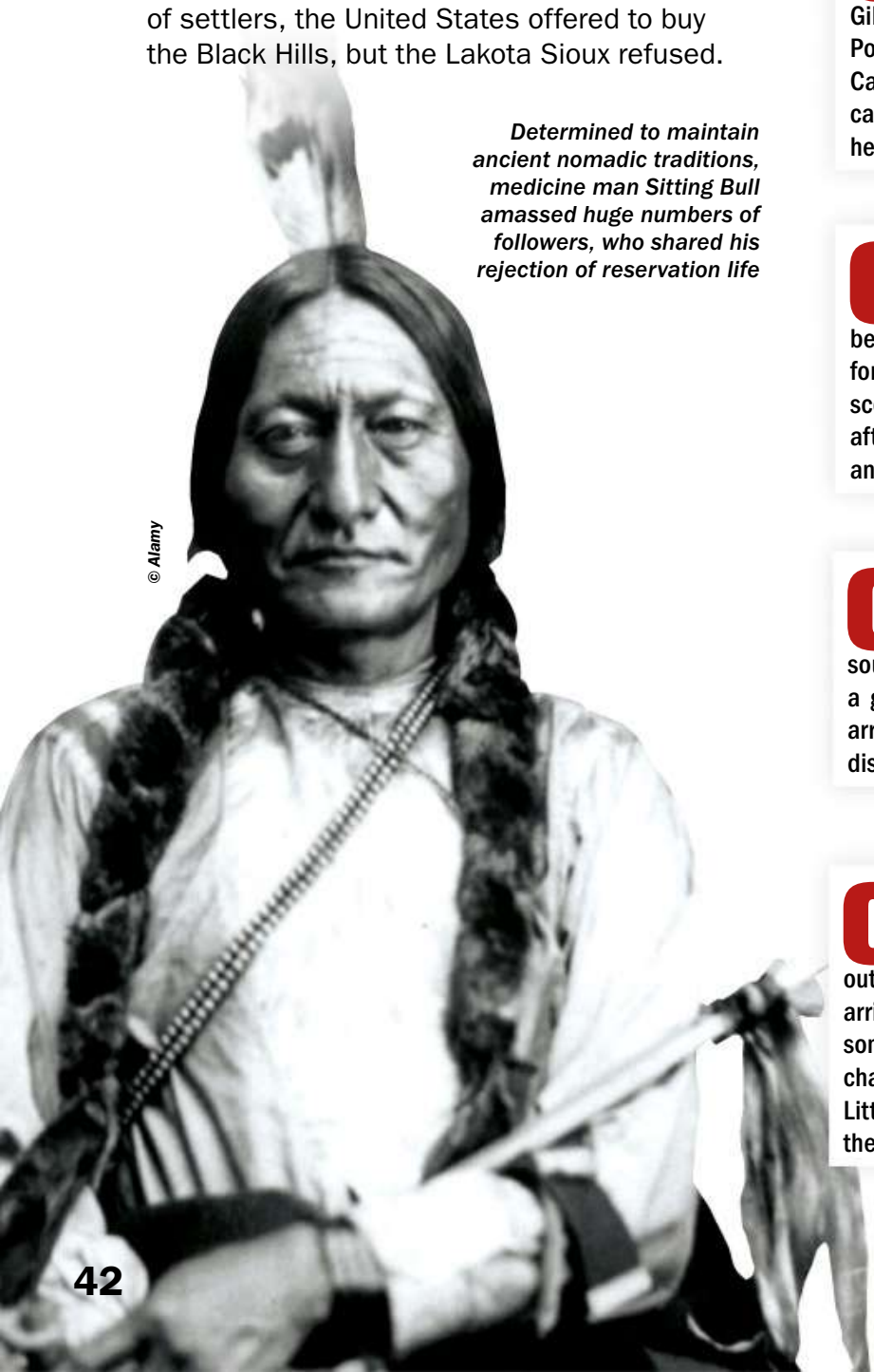
rations from ‘Agencies’ along the river, the rest remained traditional nomads – hunting and roaming across the ‘Unceded Territory’, where the last of the North American buffalo herds grazed.

After Red Cloud’s retirement to reservation life, the ‘non-treaty’ Indians turned to the medicine man Sitting Bull – a spiritual leader who insisted on maintaining ancient traditions and customs. Backed by Crazy Horse – a famous warrior still in his 20s – and several other leaders, as white settlers continued to stretch their railroads further west Sitting Bull encouraged increasing numbers of Indians to leave the reservations.

In 1874, just six years after the peace treaty, the US Army sent the 7th US Cavalry Regiment under the leadership of Custer to South Dakota’s Black Hills in the heart of the Indian lands. A veteran of the Civil War, Custer had proved himself a reckless yet fearless and capable soldier, becoming the youngest ever major-general in US history.

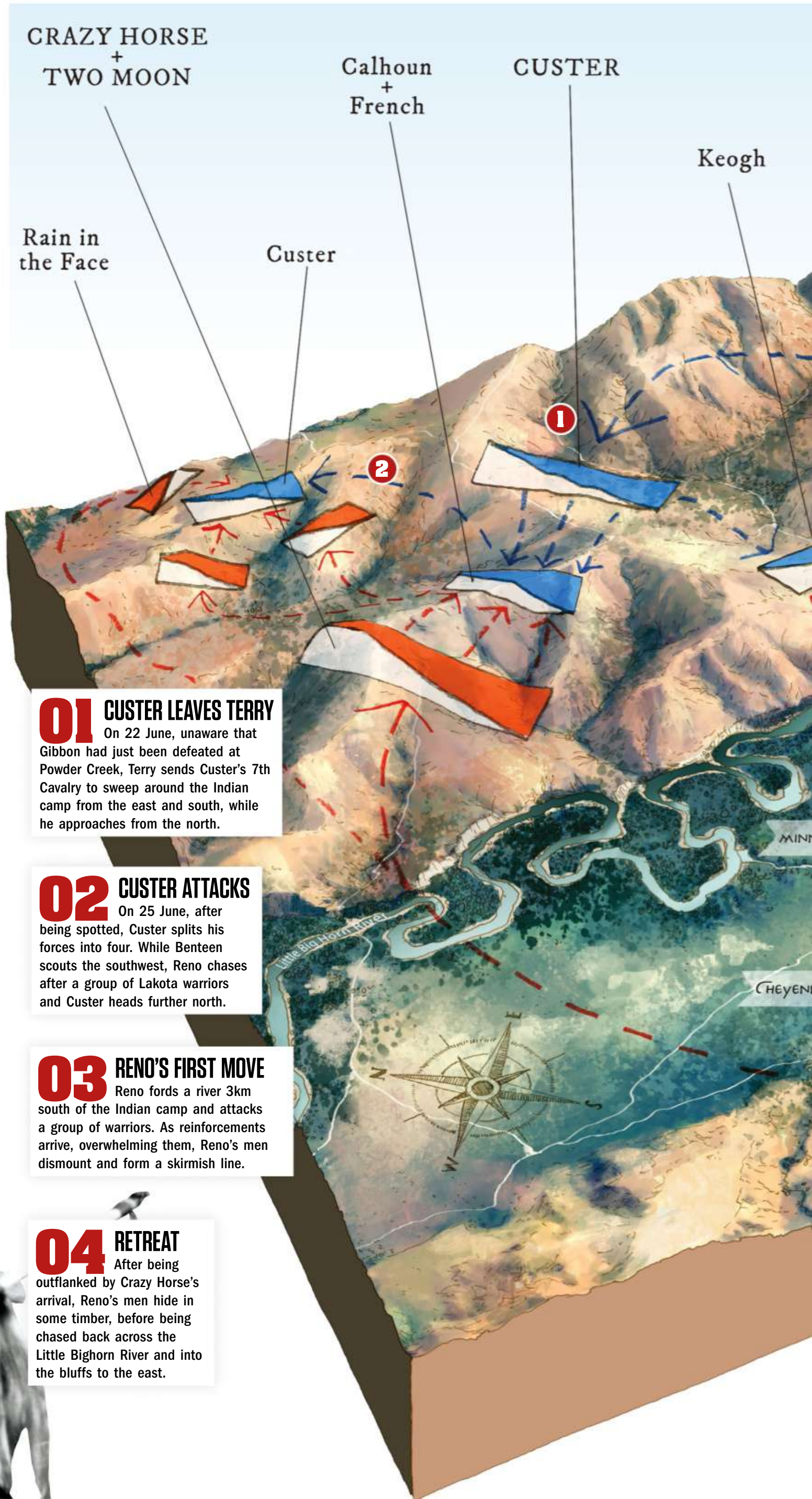
Notoriously unpredictable, in 1867 Custer had taken part in a campaign against the Southern Cheyenne, after which he was court-martialed for absenting himself from command and shooting deserters. The next year he took part in another campaign against the Cheyenne, where at the ‘Battle’ of the Washita he slaughtered 103 people in a reservation village of peaceful Southern Cheyenne. It was described by the Indian Bureau as a “massacre of innocent Indians” and “cold-blooded butchery”.

During Custer’s 1874 expedition into the Black Hills, prospectors discovered gold, sparking another influx of white miners and entrepreneurs. Rather than quelling the tide of settlers, the United States offered to buy the Black Hills, but the Lakota Sioux refused.



Determined to maintain ancient nomadic traditions, medicine man Sitting Bull amassed huge numbers of followers, who shared his rejection of reservation life

© Alamy



01 CUSTER LEAVES TERRY

On 22 June, unaware that Gibbon had just been defeated at Powder Creek, Terry sends Custer’s 7th Cavalry to sweep around the Indian camp from the east and south, while he approaches from the north.

02 CUSTER ATTACKS

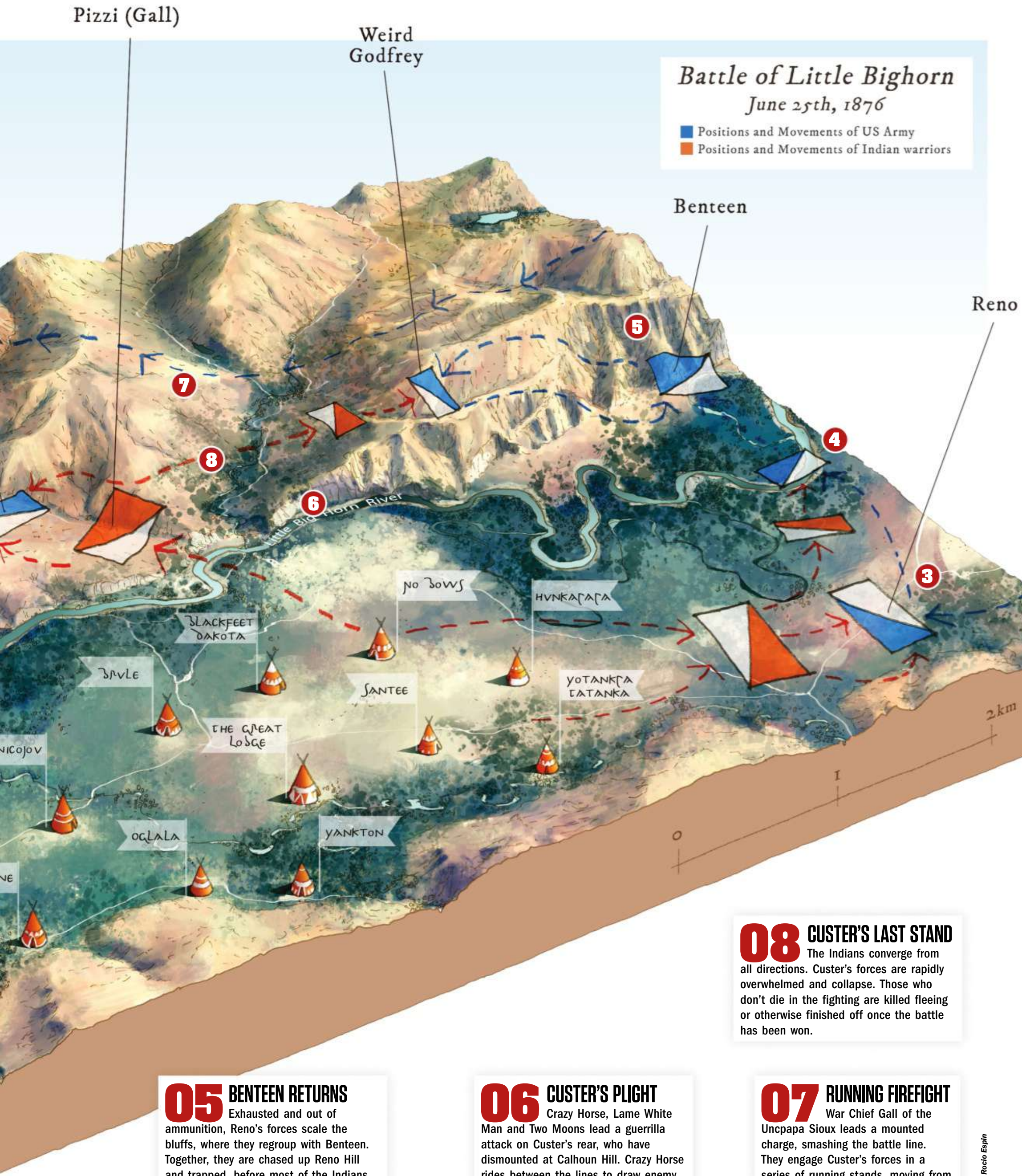
On 25 June, after being spotted, Custer splits his forces into four. While Benteen scouts the southwest, Reno chases after a group of Lakota warriors and Custer heads further north.

03 RENO’S FIRST MOVE

Reno fords a river 3km south of the Indian camp and attacks a group of warriors. As reinforcements arrive, overwhelming them, Reno’s men dismount and form a skirmish line.

04 RETREAT

After being outflanked by Crazy Horse’s arrival, Reno’s men hide in some timber, before being chased back across the Little Bighorn River and into the bluffs to the east.



08 CUSTER'S LAST STAND
The Indians converge from all directions. Custer's forces are rapidly overwhelmed and collapse. Those who don't die in the fighting are killed fleeing or otherwise finished off once the battle has been won.

05 BENTEEN RETURNS
Exhausted and out of ammunition, Reno's forces scale the bluffs, where they regroup with Benteen. Together, they are chased up Reno Hill and trapped, before most of the Indians break off and head north. They will remain under siege until the following evening.

06 CUSTER'S PLIGHT
Crazy Horse, Lame White Man and Two Moons lead a guerrilla attack on Custer's rear, who have dismounted at Calhoun Hill. Crazy Horse rides between the lines to draw enemy fire, allowing his forces to charge when the US troops stop to reload.

07 RUNNING FIREFIGHT
War Chief Gall of the Uncpapa Sioux leads a mounted charge, smashing the battle line. They engage Custer's forces in a series of running stands, moving from Calhoun Hill to Custer Hill, spiralling into a chaotic running firefight.

Illustration: Rocio Espin

Desperate to crush the independent Plains Indians once and for all, in the winter of 1875 the Commissioner of Indian affairs demanded all Sioux report to a reservation by the end of January or be declared 'hostile'.

Having already stocked up on arms and ammunition, as Agency corruption sparked off a famine, increasing numbers of Indians left the reservations to join Sitting Bull's movement. Violating the existing treaty, General Philip Sheridan, commander of the Military Division of the Missouri, dispatched thousands of soldiers to engage the Sioux and Cheyenne and force them from the Big Horn Valley into the Great Sioux Reservation.

In March 1876 Colonel John Gibbon left Montana with 450 men, followed by General George Crook, who left Wyoming Territory with 1,000 cavalry in May. General Alfred Terry marched out of Dakota Territory with 879 men – mostly comprised of Lieutenant Colonel Custer's 7th Cavalry. Sheridan hoped any of these three armies could put down what he expected would be a maximum of 1,500 enemy warriors. With the nomadic Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne always moving around, pinning them down with one large force would be extremely challenging, even with the assistance of Indian auxiliaries.

Because the Indians were particularly mobile in summer, winter campaigns had always proved most effective. However, while Sheridan had hoped the three columns would converge on the camp from three directions, only Crook's was ready in time for the winter. Travelling through sub-zero temperatures with more than 300 soldiers, within ten days he encountered 250 warriors at the Powder River Valley. Despite outnumbering the enemy, after losing four soldiers, with six wounded and one abandoned, he was forced to withdraw – a setback from which it would take months to recover. In the process, he had squandered the element of surprise: now the Indians knew the US Army was coming.

The tribes gather

According to an eyewitness – an Oglala Sioux warrior named He Dog – everyone who saw the Native American encampment proclaimed it was the largest they had ever seen. The Cheyenne were stationed at the north, downriver end, near the broad ford where two water bodies emptied into the Little Bighorn River. At the opposite end were the Hunkpapa Sioux, with the Sans Arc, Brulé, Minneconjou, Santee and Oglala in between. The Oglala may have been the largest group, followed by the Hunkpapa, with a total of up to 7,000 fighting-age boys and men in all.

As the columns under Gibbons and Terry closed down on their location, on 5 June the Lakota and Cheyenne held their annual Sun Dance ceremony along the Rosebud River. There, after tearing off 100 pieces of his own flesh in sacrifice, Sitting Bull fell into a trance and awoke with a vision of white attackers falling upside down into his village. It was a vision that he interpreted as a premonition of a great victory. On 17 June, while resting with more than 1,000 men, Crook was ambushed by hundreds of warriors under Crazy Horse and once again forced into a retreat, taking his forces out of the action.

Four days later, unaware of Crook's defeat, Terry sent Custer and his 7th Cavalry to perform a wide flanking manoeuvre and attack the Indians from the east and south. The plan was to prevent them from being able to disperse into the wilderness, while Terry and Gibbon's infantry and cavalry hit from the north. Supposedly, the Indians along the Little Bighorn River would be "so completely enclosed as to make their escape virtually impossible".

On 25 June, when his Crow and Arikara scouts spotted traces of the enemy encampment near the Little Bighorn River, Custer initially wanted to launch a surprise attack. When the scouts indicated their presence had already been spotted by enemy warriors, he decided to attack immediately. At Wolf Mountain, he split his forces into four, retaining 210 men while sending 125 with Captain Frederick Benteen, 140 with Major Marcus Reno and the rest guarding the slow-moving pack train of supplies.

When reports of US troop movements came in mid-afternoon, the Oglala elder Runs the Enemy recounted: "We could hardly believe that soldiers were so near." Soon, reports came

"THE DUST WAS THICK AND WE COULD HARDLY SEE. WE GOT RIGHT AMONG THE SOLDIERS AND KILLED A LOT WITH OUR BOWS AND ARROWS AND TOMAHAWKS. CRAZY HORSE WAS AHEAD OF ALL, AND HE KILLED A LOT OF THEM WITH HIS WAR CLUB"

After sneaking up from the ridges and ravines, the Indian coalition shattered Custer's dismounted rear and began to encircle the 7th Cavalry

in that US soldiers had killed an Indian boy just over 3km away, and a woman even closer. Oglala chief Thunder Bear described how "the country... looked as if filled with smoke, so much dust was there".

While Benteen was sent southwest to scout the bluffs to the left of the main enemy encampment, Custer and Reno pressed on. At 2pm, after spotting some Lakota warriors, Custer sent Reno to chase after them. Reno forded a river 3km south of the village, and launched a surprise attack on a group of advancing warriors. The Hunkpapa first raised the alarm when a group of Arikara Indians working for the US Army darted towards their animals grazing in a nearby ravine. Before long, the shots started, which a Hunkpapa soldier described as sounding "like hail on tepees and tree tops".

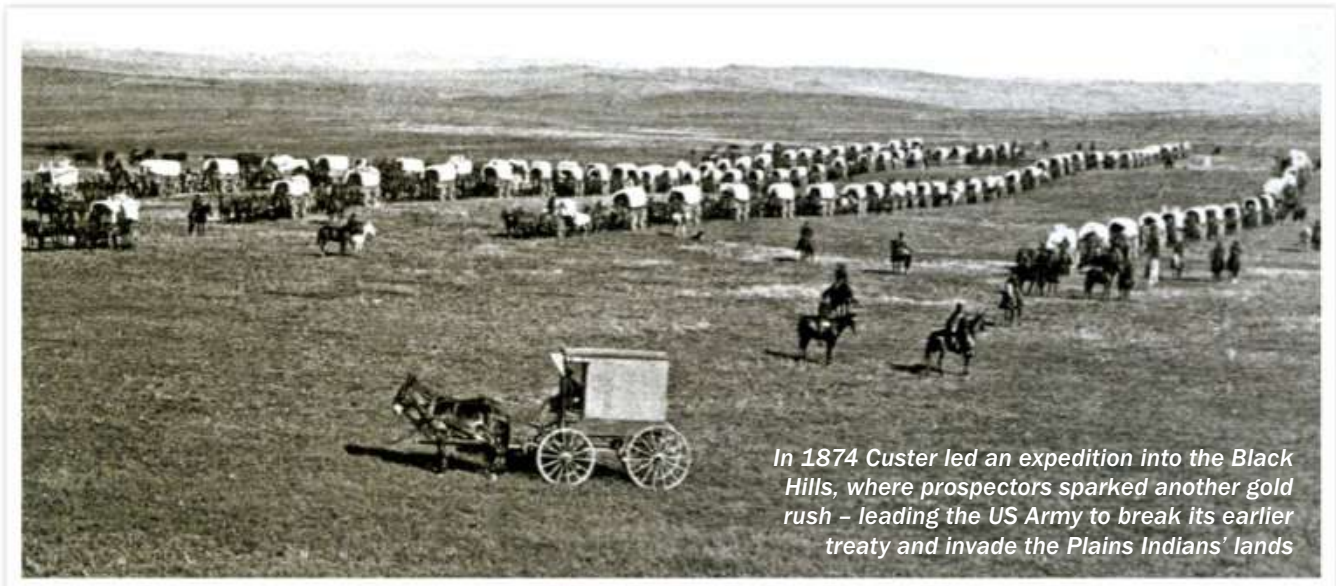
As the men assembled, Crazy Horse summoned his medicine man to invoke the spirits. His battle planning and rituals took so long that one young soldier said "many of his warriors became impatient". Undeterred, Crazy Horse wove some long stems of grass into his hair and burned a pinch of medicine from the bag around his neck over a fire of buffalo chips, the smoke carrying his prayers to the heavens. After painting his face and dusting his horse with dry earth, he was ready.

Despite attacking first, Reno was soon outnumbered by the swelling numbers of Indian defenders. Overwhelmed, he had his men dismount and form a skirmish line, but they were outflanked on the left by a group of mounted warriors and chased into some timber by the river. Soon the warriors began roaring: "Crazy Horse is coming!" With that, the legendary Crazy Horse raced defiantly alongside the US soldiers, intentionally drawing their fire – an act known as a 'brave run'.

Under relentless attack, Reno became desperate, darting back towards the river, and crossing over again – some of his men drowning in the process. As he chased, Crazy Horse yelled to his men: "Here are some of the soldiers after us again. Do your best, and let us kill them all off today that they may not trouble us anymore. All ready! Charge!"

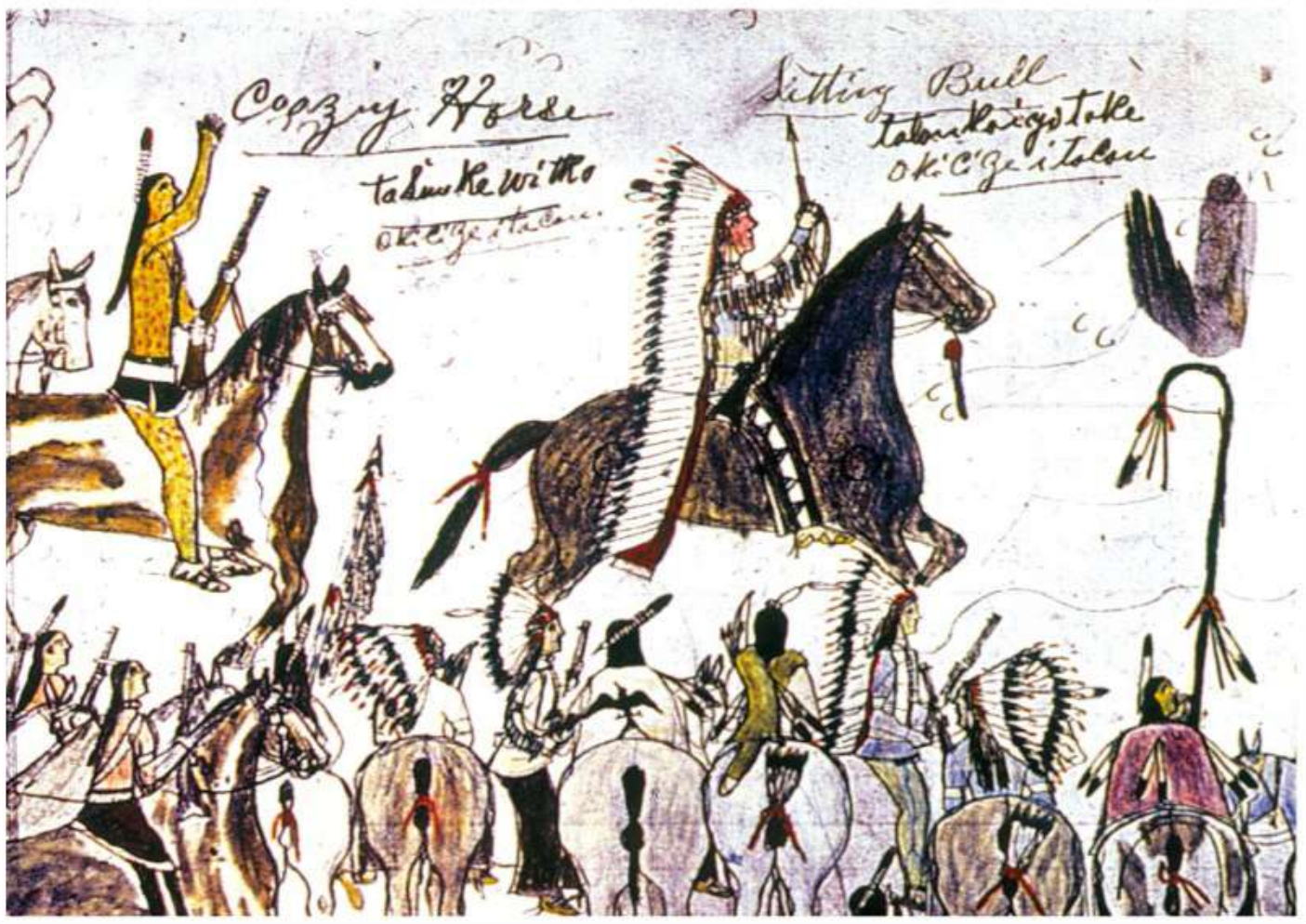
Reno's men crossed over and fled into some bluffs to the east, with an Oglala warrior Flying Hawk later recalling: "The dust was thick and we could hardly see. We got right among the soldiers and killed a lot with our bows and arrows and tomahawks. Crazy Horse was ahead of all, and he killed a lot of them with his war club."

Comparing the pursuit to a buffalo hunt, the Indians kept clawing away at Reno's rear, shooting at close range and ripping men from their saddles. By 4pm, as Reno's exhausted battalion scaled the bluffs, out of ammunition and on the brink of collapse, Benteen's forces returned with supplies and a message from Custer: "Come on. Big Village. Be Quick. Bring Packs. P.S. Bring Packs."



In 1874 Custer led an expedition into the Black Hills, where prospectors sparked another gold rush – leading the US Army to break its earlier treaty and invade the Plains Indians' lands

All Images © Alamy



At this time the Indians began to break away, heading further north to Custer's location. With distant gunshots crackling downstream, Reno and Benteen dragged their wounded up to Weir Point and looked out over the valley below that was filled with dust and gun smoke. From there they were chased up Reno Hill, where the Indians kept them under siege – wondering what had happened to Custer's men.

As badly as Reno's men had suffered, Custer was in far deeper trouble. After heading north along Medicine Tail Coulee ravine, two companies of his men were attacked at Medicine Tail ford and dismounted. As they readied themselves for a desperate stand on Calhoun Hill, Custer scrambled north along the spine of what's now called Custer Ridge.

With Reno heading into the hills, Crazy Horse had already returned to the centre of the camp, crossed a ravine and up a gulch towards Calhoun Hill, his movement obscured by the landscape. Once he arrived, he began unleashing shots as fast as he could load his gun. As the air filled with powder smoke, the two sides kept low, popping out from their rocky cover to shoot. This was guerrilla warfare, an art in which the Indians were experts. They flattened their feathers to conceal their movements and the US soldiers followed suit, taking off their caps. Like Crazy Horse, Chiefs Lame White Man and Two Moons snuck up from the ridges and ravines across the field to unleash arrows in great arches like mortar fire, without exposing their positions.

As Custer's men tried to establish a rhythm, Crazy Horse suddenly roared out on horseback, blowing on his eagle bone whistle and riding haphazardly between the two opposing lines of soldiers. "Crazy Horse… was the bravest man I ever saw," said one Arapaho warrior named Waterman. "He rode closest to the soldiers, yelling to his warriors. All the soldiers were shooting at him but he was never hit." The US soldiers desperately unleashed a volley of shots at him all at once, playing straight into Crazy Horse's hands. When they stopped to reload, the Indians charged in all at once – clubbing and stabbing them to death. War Chief Gall of the Uncpapa Sioux led a mounted charge, shattering the battle line.

"ONE OF CUSTER'S MEN WAS SEEN MOUNTING A HORSE AND FLEEING INTO THE DISTANCE, BEFORE SHOOTING HIMSELF IN THE HEAD"

Those who were not killed immediately darted for the high ground further north, grabbing horses if they could or else sprinting under a hail of bullets. As they scrambled along the ridge towards Custer's command the soldiers made "five different stands" lasting around ten minutes, according to Minneconjou warrior Red Horse. Among the "whooping and shouting", Red Horse himself was heard proclaiming "there is never a better time to die" – reflecting the honour bestowed on those who were killed in combat.

The battle descended into a running firefight, with the survivors of each engagement darting back towards Custer's command. It grew increasingly brutal as the Indians set upon the US soldiers with fists, knives and clubs. As the fighting closed in on Custer himself, the Cheyenne warrior Brave Bear recalled: "I think Custer saw he was caught in [a] bad place and would like to have gotten out of it if he could, but he was hemmed in all around and could do nothing only to die then."

The battlefield was turning into a nightmare: one survivor described how he saw an Indian "shot through the jaw and all bloody", others were scalped. One of Custer's men was seen mounting a horse and fleeing into the distance, before shooting himself in the head. Others dropped their weapons in surrender, begging to be taken prisoner. However, as Red Horse pointed out, the Sioux only took women prisoner, adding they "did not take a single soldier, but killed all of them".

The enemy pressed on towards Custer's position from all directions, with the warrior Brulé Foolish Elk recalling: "The Indians were so numerous that the soldiers could not go any further and they knew that they had to die." After picking apart the last 40 dust-covered, limping soldiers, the warriors flocked to the hill, killing off those gasping for breath and stripping them of their clothes and guns.

Reno and Benteen remained under siege until sunset the following day, when the Indians finally broke off and headed into the Big Horn Mountains. On 27 June, still unaware of what had befallen Custer, scouts from the Terry-Gibbon column arrived from the north and stumbled across the bodies of his men strewn across the ridges east of the river. Many were naked and some had been mutilated. While Custer's corpse was unmolested, his 31-year-old brother Tom – a double Medal of Honor recipient – was only recognisable from a 'TWC' tattoo on his right arm.

Aftermath

The Battle of Little Bighorn was a spectacular victory for the Lakota and Cheyenne, seemingly in fulfilment of Sitting Bull's prophetic vision. Sitting Bull later proclaimed: "Let no man say that this was a massacre. They came to kill us and killed themselves." While the Indians are estimated to have lost fewer than 100 men, the US Army lost 261, including all five companies under Custer, with a further 52 wounded.

However, it was also to be the Sioux's last victory. Custer's death only further fuelled the US Army's desire to force the free-roaming

All images © Alamy

***Above, left:** Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull both played instrumental roles in motivating and uniting their forces at the battle*

***Above, middle:** Before long, the fight came to Custer himself, who perished alongside all 210 members of his 7th Cavalry*

***Above, right:** As Custer's line collapsed the battle ended in a bloodbath, with vast numbers of Indians swarming over the enemy and finishing off the survivors*

Plains Indians onto reservations for good. The Lakota hunting grounds were invaded by huge numbers of expeditionary forces and within a year the Northern Plains Indians had either fled north to Canada or surrendered – with the Black Hills taken by force without compensation. Those on reservations were subject to military rule and cut off from Agency Indian support.

After his death Custer – who had previously been chastised for massacring a peaceful village – was rebranded as both an American hero and victim; immortalised in songs, poems and books. His widow Libbie embarked on a lengthy propaganda campaign, writing a series of books recasting her late husband's legacy.

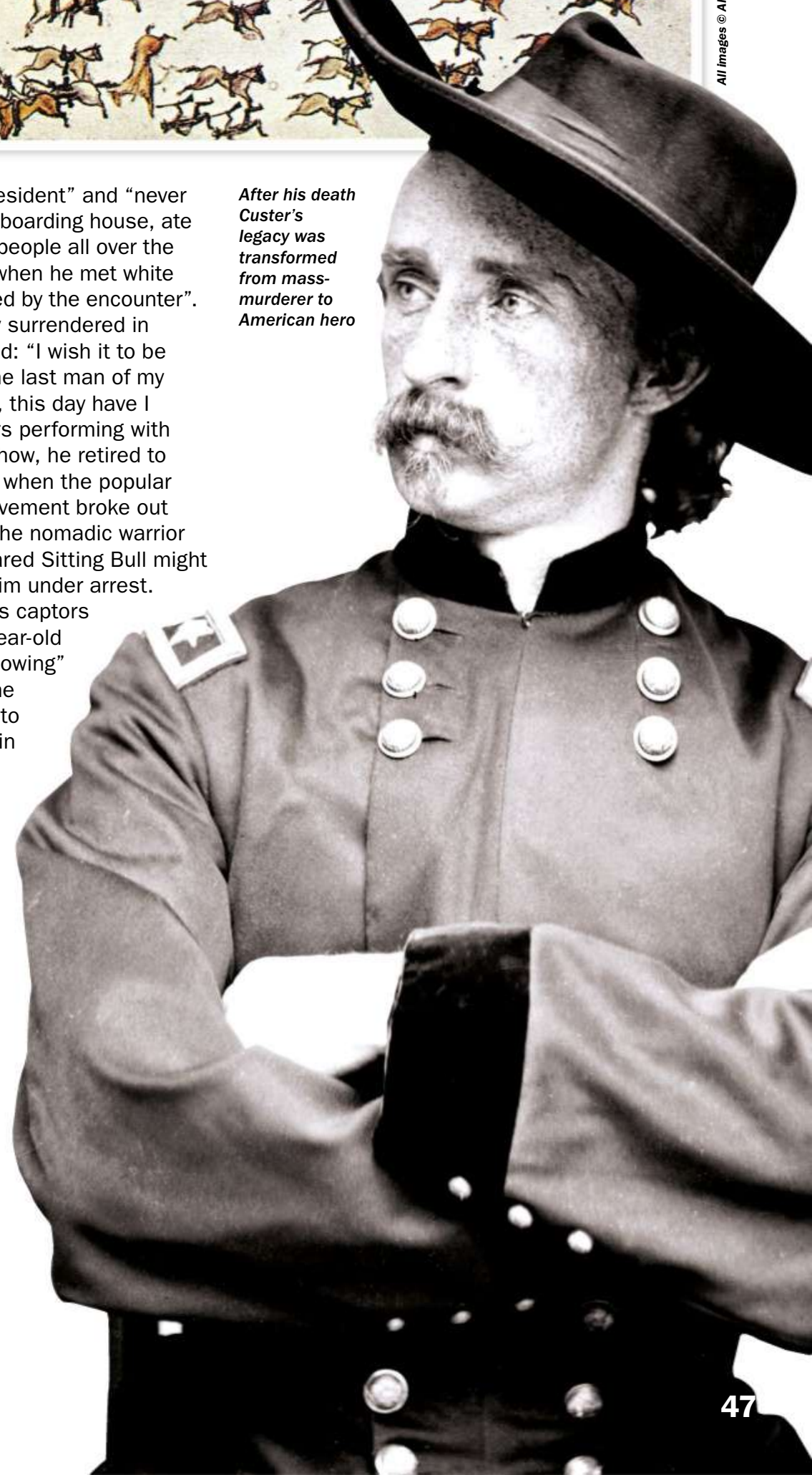
In 1877, Crazy Horse was tricked into entering a jail at Fort Robertson, Nebraska. Fiercely independent to the end, he began to resist and was subsequently bayonetted. As he died, not even in his 40s yet, he refused to lie on a white man's bed – instead perishing on the floor.

In his book *Great Plains*, Ian Frazier describes how Crazy Horse became an icon: "Because he remained himself from the moment of his birth to the moment he died; because he knew exactly where he wanted to live, and never left; because he may have surrendered, but he was never defeated in battle; because, although he was killed, even the Army admitted he was never captured; because he was so free that he didn't know what a jail looked like."

Frazier says that Crazy Horse's "dislike of the oncoming civilisation was prophetic" and adds that "he never met the President" and "never rode on a train, slept in a boarding house, ate at a table." Unlike "many people all over the world", he emphasises, "when he met white men he was not diminished by the encounter".

When Sitting Bull finally surrendered in 1881, it is claimed he said: "I wish it to be remembered that I was the last man of my tribe to surrender my rifle, this day have I given it to you." After years performing with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, he retired to reservation life. However, when the popular Ghost Dance spiritual movement broke out across the US – reviving the nomadic warrior spirit – the authorities feared Sitting Bull might get involved and placed him under arrest. After initially going with his captors peacefully, when his 14-year-old son chastised him for "allowing" himself to be "taken by the Metal Breasts" he began to resist and was later shot in the head by a policeman.

The Ghost Dance conflict culminated in the Wounded Knee Massacre, where on 28 December 1890 Colonel James Forsyth's revived 7th Cavalry butchered hundreds of Lakota men, women and children – with 20 perpetrators receiving the Medal of Honor for their actions. By now the great victory at Little Bighorn and their days of free-roaming were but a distant memory for the Sioux, who no longer had the means to resist reservation life.



After his death Custer's legacy was transformed from mass-murderer to American hero

CLOSING DATE 01.08.22

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

TRY 3 ISSUES FOR £3

BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE
HISTORY of WAR
BATTLE OF MIDW
Historian James Holland reveals why th carrier clash was so critical to victor
BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE
HISTORY of WAR
UKRAINE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE
The struggle to break from Soviet control
OVER 3,000 KILLED, CAPTURED & WOUNDED
DIEPPE RAID
Was the 1942 operation a crucial lesson for D-Day victory, or a disastrous debacle?
SPECIAL FORCES HERO IN 'NAM
Real story of the Ranger who saved an entire platoon
CUSTER'S LAST STAND
Inside the Battle of Little Bighorn
AMERICA'S THUNDERBOLT
Why the P-47 was one of the toughest WWII fighter planes
BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE
HISTORY of WAR
DRONE WARFARE
From recon to precision strike
AT WAR IN
SON'S NAVY
SIEGE OF CHARLESTON
Britain's biggest victory in the Revolutionary War
WINSTON BEFORE THE WAR
Follow the unlikely rise of the UK's World War II saviour

SAVE 74%

Visit www.magazinesdirect.com/WAR/A67U
or call 0330 333 1113 & quote A67U

BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE
HISTORY of WAR
UKRAINE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE
The struggle to break from Soviet control
OVER 3,000 KILLED, CAPTURED & WOUNDED
DIEPPE RAID
Was the 1942 operation a crucial lesson for D-Day victory, or a disastrous debacle?
SPECIAL FORCES HERO IN 'NAM
Real story of the Ranger who saved an entire platoon
CUSTER'S LAST STAND
Inside the Battle of Little Bighorn
AMERICA'S THUNDERBOLT
Why the P-47 was one of the toughest WWII fighter planes

REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE...

- ✪ You'll never miss an issue
- ✪ It's delivered direct to your front door
- ✪ Brilliant value – save money on the cover price

PRINT EDITION SUBSCRIPTION

3 issues for just £3!

BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE
HISTORY of WAR
UKRAINE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE
The struggle to break from Soviet control
OVER 3,000 KILLED, CAPTURED & WOUNDED
DIEPPE RAID
Was the 1942 operation a crucial lesson for D-Day victory, or a disastrous debacle?
SPECIAL FORCES HERO IN 'NAM
Real story of the Ranger who saved an entire platoon
CUSTER'S LAST STAND
Inside the Battle of Little Bighorn
AMERICA'S THUNDERBOLT
Why the P-47 was one of the toughest WWII fighter planes

PRINT + DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION

3 issues for just £3!

BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE
HISTORY of WAR
UKRAINE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE
The struggle to break from Soviet control
OVER 3,000 KILLED, CAPTURED & WOUNDED
DIEPPE RAID
Was the 1942 operation a crucial lesson for D-Day victory, or a disastrous debacle?

Terms and conditions: Offer closes 01.08.2022. Offer open to new subscribers only. Direct Debit offer is available to UK subscribers only. Subscribe and pay £3 for 3 issues, followed by the price shown at the point of purchase. We will notify you in advance of any price changes. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). Payment is non-refundable after the 14 day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries please call: +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday-Friday 9am-7pm and Saturday 10am-3pm UK Time (excluding bank holidays) or e-mail: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.

UKRAINE'S WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

From 1917-21, against the backdrop of the end of the First World War and the Russian Civil War, Ukraine fought for its sovereignty against Bolsheviks, Germans, Polish... and even itself

WORDS **JOSH WEST**

Images © Getty

Ukraine's current war with Russia is not the first time the country has battled for its independence. Between 1917 and 1921, a vicious and complex conflict was waged for the freedom of the nation. But this was not just a war against the old Russian overlords – the Ukrainian War of Independence had countless belligerents including the Russians, Germany and Poland. When the Ukrainians were not fighting these nations, they were fighting each other, with nationalists, Bolsheviks, conservatives and even anarchists everywhere. Ukraine's War of Independence is often seen as a footnote to the Russian Civil War, but it is very much its own story.

The road to war

Under the Second Partition of Poland in 1793, Ukraine was divided in two. The western region, historically called Galicia, was part of the Austrian Empire, while the majority was incorporated into the Russian Empire.

Subsequently, when the First World War began in 1914, Ukraine was the primary battleground of the Eastern Front between Russia and the Central Powers and subjected to horrific violence. As Tsarist forces invaded Galicia in 1914, the retreating Austrians executed thousands of suspected collaborators. Once in control of the country, the Tsarist regime attempted a programme of 'Russification'. The Ukrainian language was prohibited, national institutions were banned and the Greek Catholic Church was liquidated.

This ended abruptly in February 1917, when Tsar Nicholas II abdicated after the February Revolution. The Provisional Government that replaced him was more sympathetic to the empire's non-Russian peoples, and the Tsarist restrictions on freedom of language, speech and assembly were lifted.

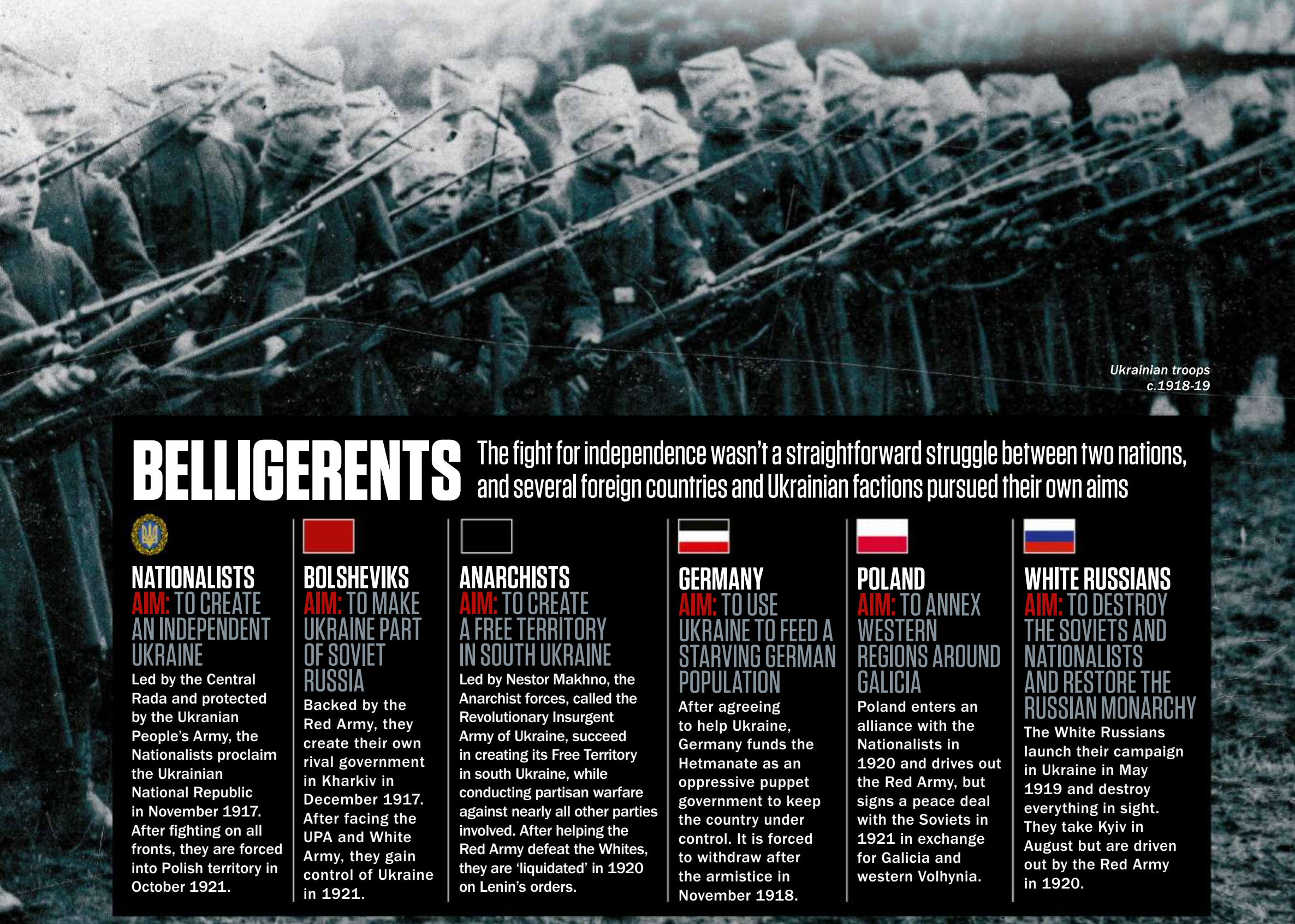
Declaring independence

Ukrainian nationalism blossomed under the Provisional Government. Its lifting of restrictions revived the national press and saw the creation of political parties and cultural organisations.

On 17 April 1917, these organisations created a Central Rada (council) in Kyiv as a Ukrainian national assembly. Its primary goal was autonomy for Ukraine within a Russian democratic federation. The following month, the Rada was officially adopted and historian Mykhaylo Hrushevsky was named Ukraine's first president. While the Russian Provisional Government disputed the jurisdiction of the Rada, it did recognise its legitimacy and Ukrainian sovereignty.

But the harmony was shattered with the collapse of the Provisional Government in the October Revolution of 1917, when Vladimir Lenin's Bolsheviks created a communist state. After an uprising in Kyiv against the Bolsheviks, the Rada denounced their authority over Ukraine and proclaimed the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR) in Kyiv on 20 November. The Bolsheviks in the east of Ukraine, however, declared a Ukrainian Soviet Republic in Kharkiv the following month.

Despite passionate nationalism, Ukraine was far from united. The Central Rada in Kyiv faced mounting aggression from the Kharkiv soviets, who were backed by the Red Army. Meanwhile, in the south of the country, an Anarchist Free Territory was created by the enigmatic Anarchist Nestor Makhno. Makhno



Ukrainian troops c.1918-19

BELLIGERENTS

The fight for independence wasn't a straightforward struggle between two nations, and several foreign countries and Ukrainian factions pursued their own aims

NATIONALISTS
AIM: TO CREATE AN INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

Led by the Central Rada and protected by the Ukranian People's Army, the Nationalists proclaim the Ukrainian National Republic in November 1917. After fighting on all fronts, they are forced into Polish territory in October 1921.

BOLSHEVIKS
AIM: TO MAKE UKRAINE PART OF SOVIET RUSSIA

Backed by the Red Army, they create their own rival government in Kharkiv in December 1917. After facing the UPA and White Army, they gain control of Ukraine in 1921.

ANARCHISTS
AIM: TO CREATE A FREE TERRITORY IN SOUTH UKRAINE

Led by Nestor Makhno, the Anarchist forces, called the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine, succeed in creating its Free Territory in south Ukraine, while conducting partisan warfare against nearly all other parties involved. After helping the Red Army defeat the Whites, they are 'liquidated' in 1920 on Lenin's orders.

GERMANY
AIM: TO USE UKRAINE TO FEED A STARVING GERMAN POPULATION

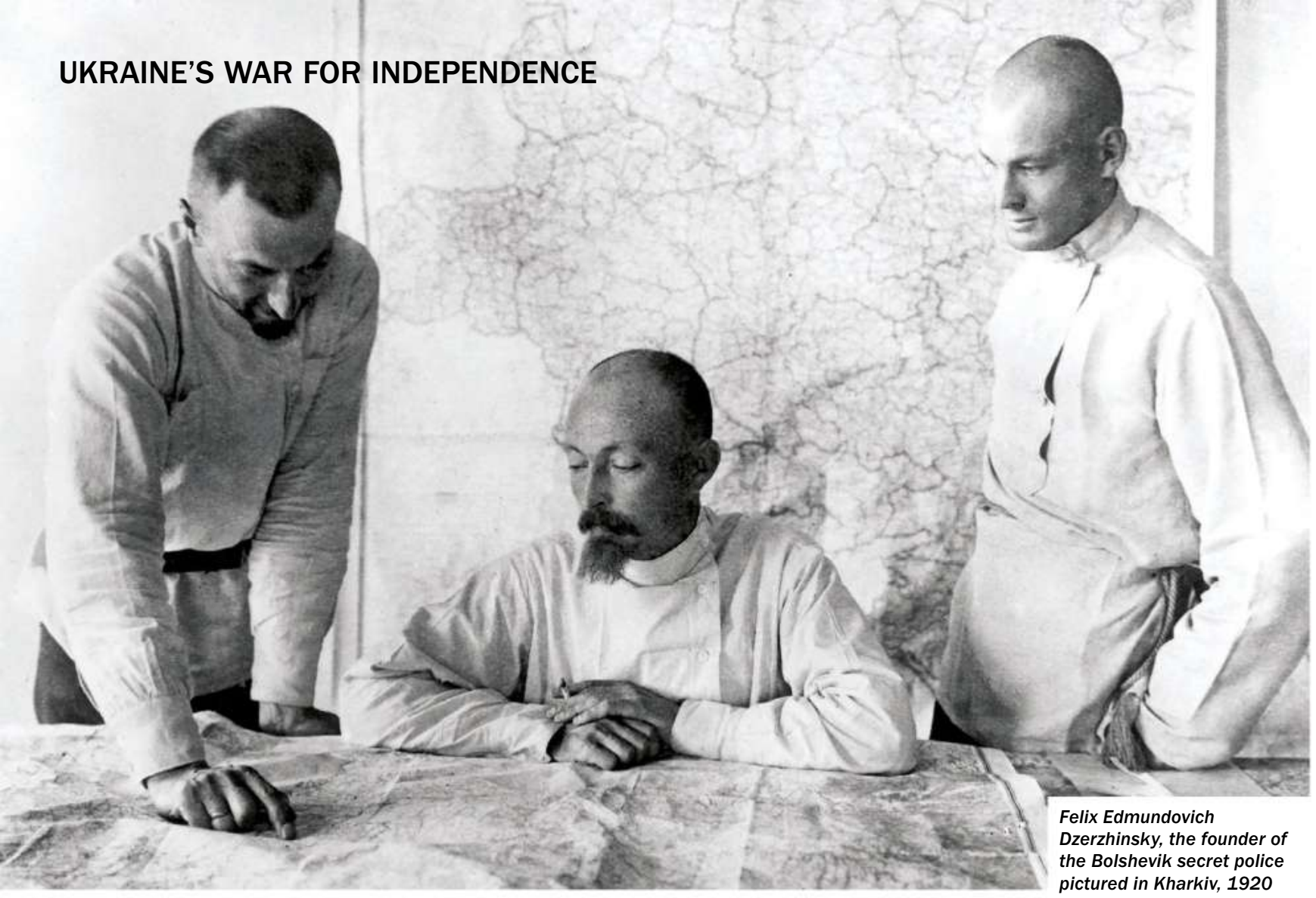
After agreeing to help Ukraine, Germany funds the Hetmanate as an oppressive puppet government to keep the country under control. It is forced to withdraw after the armistice in November 1918.

POLAND
AIM: TO ANNEX WESTERN REGIONS AROUND GALICIA

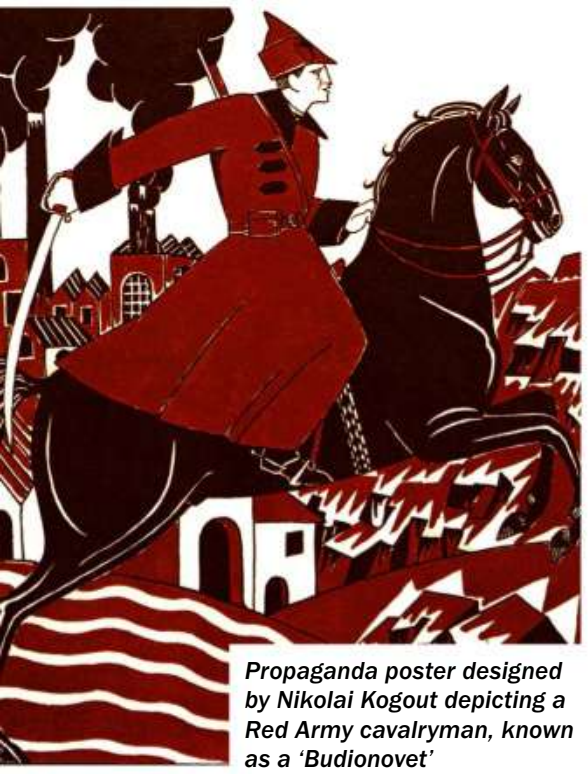
Poland enters an alliance with the Nationalists in 1920 and drives out the Red Army, but signs a peace deal with the Soviets in 1921 in exchange for Galicia and western Volhynia.

WHITE RUSSIANS
AIM: TO DESTROY THE SOVIETS AND NATIONALISTS AND RESTORE THE RUSSIAN MONARCHY

The White Russians launch their campaign in Ukraine in May 1919 and destroy everything in sight. They take Kyiv in August but are driven out by the Red Army in 1920.



Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the Bolshevik secret police pictured in Kharkiv, 1920



Propaganda poster designed by Nikolai Kogout depicting a Red Army cavalryman, known as a 'Budionovet'

Polish artillery is photographed entering Kyiv during the Soviet-Polish War 1919-21

A group of workers and soldiers of Petrograd that fought for Kyiv, January 1918

TIMELINE

1914-17 WWI
Ukraine is the front line between the Central Powers and Russia, which attempts to 'Russify' the country

FEBRUARY 1917
FEBRUARY REVOLUTION
The Tsar abdicates and the Provisional Government lifts anti-nationalist laws

17 MARCH 1917
CENTRAL RADA CREATED
The Ukrainian Central Rada is created as a national assembly by nationalist organisations

20 NOVEMBER 1917
UKRAINIAN NATIONAL REPUBLIC CREATED
The Rada denounces Bolshevik authority in Ukraine following the October Revolution

26 JANUARY 1918
INDEPENDENCE DECLARED
Following a Bolshevik invasion, the Rada declares the total independence of the UNR

MARCH 1918
TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK
Red Army withdraws from Ukraine after it is named a German sphere of influence

29 APRIL 1918
HETMANATE CREATED
The Rada is overthrown by General Skoropadskyi's German-backed coup and a conservative autocracy is formed

OCTOBER 1918
WESTERN REPUBLIC CREATED
After the retreat of Austria, the Western Ukrainian Republic is formed from western states like Galicia

had built up his Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine by stealing the weapons of retreating Tsarist soldiers, and spent his time playing the Nationalists and Bolsheviks against one another.

In January 1918, the Bolsheviks launched their attack on the UNR from the West Bank of the Dnieper River. In response, on 26 January, the Rada declared the absolute independence of Ukraine. But they were forced from Kyiv soon after following the Red Army's capture of the city in February.

The Hetmanate

As determined as the Ukrainian People's Army (UPA) was in fighting for and defending Ukraine's independence, they could not hold back the might of the Red Army. In desperation, the Central Rada looked to the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary for military support. On 9 February 1918, they signed the First Treaty of Brest Litovsk with the Central Powers; Ukraine would provide food for the starving people of Germany, who would respect Ukrainian neutrality.

By March, a German-Austrian offensive drove the Bolsheviks out of Kyiv. The signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Russia and the Central Powers on 9 March 1918 left Ukraine a German sphere of influence and by April all Bolshevik troops had been withdrawn. But while the Central Rada was once again in power in Kyiv, their alliance with the Central Powers was a poisoned chalice. Ukraine and the Rada were only a means to an end for Germany, a way to feed its disgruntled people. Wilhelm Groener, a German commander in Kyiv, wrote: "It would be in our interests to treat the Ukrainian government as a cover and for us to do the rest ourselves."

It did not take long for the alliance to disintegrate. The socialist policies of the Central Rada, especially their plans for land nationalisation, clashed with German High Command's plans to utilise the Ukraine as nothing more than a breadbasket. On 29 April 1918, the same day as the Central Rada ratified the constitution of the UNR, the entire regime was overthrown. The German-backed military coup was led by Ukrainian General Pavlo Skoropadskyi.

A map of Europe published in The Great World War: A History, Volume IX, edited by Frank A Mumby, c.1920

The same day, Skoropadskyi made himself Ukraine's Hetman, a medieval position given to a Polish military chief who deputised for a king. As Hetman, Skoropadskyi dissolved all laws created by the Rada and created an autocratic conservative regime dependent on landowners and the Russian middle-class. The Hetmanate became a haven for Russian aristocrats fleeing the revolutionaries in Russia, and despite sporadic harassments from Makhno and his anarchists in the south, Ukraine under the Hetmanate enjoyed relative peace.

But Skoropadskyi's regime was far from popular. Nationalists, socialists and peasants alike despised the medieval elitism the Hetmanate imposed. Political opposition came in the from of the Ukrainian National Union (UNU), while peasants broke out into rebellions and partisan warfare. But it was the capitulation of the Central Powers to the Allies in November 1918 that ended Skoropadskyi's brief reign. Without his central crutch, the Hetman soon lost authority. On 13 November, the UNU created the Directory of the UNR in preparation and, a month later, Skoropadskyi abdicated following an uprising. The Directory, under Volodymir Vynnchenko, returned to Kyiv and restored the Central Rada.

"NATIONALISTS, SOCIALISTS AND PEASANTS ALIKE DESPISED THE MEDIEVAL ELITISM THE HETMANATE IMPOSED"

The war in the west

Throughout this period of invasions and Hetmanates in eastern Ukraine, Ukraine's western regions remained under the tight authority of Austria-Hungary. But this authority began to unravel as the Central Powers began to retreat in the autumn of 1918. In October 1918, with Austria-Hungary all but defeated

Polish troops near Kyiv during the Soviet-Polish War 1919-21

Images © Getty

after the Battle of Vittoria Venito, an assembly of western Ukrainian leaders declared the creation of the Western Ukrainian National Republic (WUNR). The WUNR covered the regions of Galicia, Northern Bukovina and Transcarpathia, and on 1 November they occupied Lviv as their capital.

But no sooner had the WUNR expelled their Austrian overlords than they began a war with their Polish neighbours. The Poles, likewise free from German occupation, wanted Galicia as part of their new Polish Republic. On 21 November, Polish forces occupied Lviv and the WUNR government moved to Stanyslaviv, though they remained in control of most of Galicia.

On 22 January 1919, for the first time since 1793, Ukraine was unified when the Union of the UNR and WUNR was announced in Kyiv. Under the agreement, the WUNR would be renamed the Western Province of the Ukrainian National Republic. But little actual integration took place. The previous December, the Red Army had launched a new offensive in the east and by 5 February had retaken Kyiv. Meanwhile Polish forces succeeded in occupying Galicia, forcing the WUNR government to evacuate first to the Ukrainian West Bank and later into exile in Vienna.

Chaos reigns

By the spring of 1919, the authority of the Central Rada under Symon Petliura had collapsed. Economic disaster and the Red Army invasion led to a restless peasantry and a demoralised army. Partisan movements led by unruly warlords, known as otamany, only escalated the violence, not to mention Makhno's continuing anarchist interventions.

"DENIKIN'S WHITE ARMY SWEPT THROUGH CENTRAL AND WESTERN UKRAINE, ANNIHILATING BOTH THE SOVIETS AND UKRAINIAN NATIONALISTS"

To make matters worse, Ukraine also became home to another army. In the south-east, Tsarist General Anton Denikin was gathering his White Army of Tsarist-sympathisers to destroy the Bolshevik regime and restore the Imperial Monarchy. In May 1919, he began his offensive into Ukraine, with catastrophic results.

Denikin's White Army swept through central and western Ukraine, annihilating both the Soviets and Ukrainian nationalists. Violence, terror and brutality followed in the White Army's wake as Denikin destroyed all signs of Ukrainian nationalism. On 31 August, both the UPA and White Army arrived in Kyiv as the Red Army withdrew from the city. But the UPA was no match for Denikin's and was forced to withdraw.

By the winter of 1919, the Rada was forced into a strip of land by the Polish border while its army was trapped by Poles to the west, the Red Army to the north and the White Army in the south. Petliura, as supreme commander of the UPA, had little choice but to demobilise the army that December and begin the First Winter Campaign. Between December 1919 and April 1920, the dissolved UPA turned to guerrilla warfare; units were sent behind White and Soviet lines and 3,000-6,000 men marched over 2,500km.

Polish intervention

Since being forced against the Polish border in December 1919, Petliura had been in negotiations in Warsaw for military support from Poland. These negotiations eventually led to the Treaty of Warsaw in April 1920, whereby Poland agreed to provide military aid in return for Ukraine's surrender of Galicia and western Volhynia.

Meanwhile, Denikin's army had collapsed in February 1920 and the Red Army was once again in control of almost all eastern Ukraine. In the south, they turned on their ally Makhno (who had fought against the Whites for them), whom Lenin ordered to be "liquidated" by the Red Army. He was exiled to Romania and the Free Territory was dissolved.

But the Bolsheviks were barely back in control when the Polish-Ukrainian army crashed through the country within weeks and recaptured Kyiv on 6 May. Even a Bolshevik

TIMELINE

14 DECEMBER 1918
HETMANATE ENDS
Skoropadskyi abdicates and the Central Rada is restored

22 JANUARY 1919 UKRAINIAN UNIFICATION
Act of Union between UNR and WUR, but a Polish invasion of WUR forces the government into exile

MAY 1919 WHITE INVASION
The White Army under General Denikin begin their campaign into Ukraine, targeting both Bolsheviks and Ukrainian Nationalists

DECEMBER 1919 APRIL 1920 FIRST WINTER CAMPAIGN
President Petliura demobilises the Ukrainian People's Army and launches a guerrilla campaign

APRIL 1920 TREATY OF WARSAW
Poles agree to assist UNR against the Red Army. Their joint armies retake Kyiv in May

18 MARCH 1921 TREATY OF RIGA
Poland recognises Soviet control of Ukraine in exchange for control of Galicia and Volhynia

NOVEMBER 1921 SECOND WINTER CAMPAIGN
General Tiutiunnyk attempts to unite Ukrainian partisans against the Red Army but is quickly defeated

DECEMBER 1922 USSR CREATED
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is created and becomes a founding state of the Soviet Union

***Above:** A polish armoured vehicle in Lviv, 1920*

counter-offensive that August that pushed them all the way back to Warsaw was not enough, and by September the Red Army was once again forced across the Dnieper. With the Red Army defeat, White forces took the opportunity to launch another offensive, this time under General Pyotr Wrangel.

With a White resurgence in the south and the Red Army confined to the wrong side of the Dnieper, the Bolsheviks desperately agreed a truce with the Poles in October 1920. This proved disastrous for Petliura and the UPA, who'd depended on Polish support to get this far. Within a month, what was left of the UPA and Petliura's government was driven into Poland. On 18 March 1921, Poland and the Soviets signed the Treaty of Riga where, in exchange for Galicia and western Volhynia, Poland recognised the Soviets' control over Ukraine.

Endgame

One final attempt to drive out the Red Army was the Second Winter Offensive of November 1921. General Yuri Tiutiunnyk tried to unite the partisan movements still in Ukraine to drive the Bolsheviks out with his own army. Eight-hundred men followed him into Ukraine, but after only capturing the small town of Korosten for a few days they were encircled by Soviet cavalry in Bazar; 359 were executed and the rest taken as prisoners, while 120 escaped. The failed campaign was the last attempt by the Nationalists to regain control in Ukraine.

Ukraine was then carved up between four countries: Bukovina was annexed into Romania, Transcarpathia was inducted into the new Czechoslovakia, Poland retained its annexations in Galicia and west Volhynia, and the remainder became Soviet Ukraine. In 1922, the country officially became the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and one of the four original constituents of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Ukraine would finally gain its independence 69 years later when, on 24 August 1991, the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine proclaimed that they would no longer follow the laws of the USSR.

***Below:** A battalion of the Red Army parades in Kharkiv, 1920*

Heroes of the Medal of Honor

ROBERT L HOWARD

On 30 December 1968 this colonel was fighting in Southeast Asia, facing an overwhelming force of North Vietnamese troops, all while severely wounded

WORDS **MICHAEL E HASKEW**

There was little hope that Private First Class Robert F Scherdin was still alive. He was last seen wounded and under heavy fire, and an accompanying Montagnard soldier had been unable to move him.

Scherdin was lost during a covert US Army MACV-SOG mission behind enemy lines in Cambodia on 29 December 1968. The role of MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group) was to conduct hit-and-run raids from Vietnam into neighbouring Cambodia and Laos, hopefully disrupting enemy operations at the height of the Vietnam War. Within hours of the engagement, a mission was mounted to find Scherdin, but the situation deteriorated quickly.

Another jungle fight

Men of Hatchet Force, specially trained in secret search-and-destroy operations and the rescue of missing soldiers, boarded helicopters and sped toward the scene of the previous action. Second in command was decorated combat veteran Sergeant First Class Robert L Howard – he was sure that this fight with the North Vietnamese would be a stern test.

Minutes after the helicopters reached their designated landing zone, the rescue team came under intense fire from an enemy force of at least two companies. Howard was stunned when a grenade showered him with hot shrapnel and destroyed his M-16 assault rifle. His platoon leader had already gone down, seriously wounded.

Although unable to walk and without a weapon, Howard struggled towards the injured officer, rendered first aid and started dragging him out of the line of fire. Suddenly, an enemy bullet slammed into an ammunition pouch, touching off several rifle magazines.

> **"IF I WAITED, I GAMBLED THAT THINGS WOULD GET BETTER... IF I KEPT FIGHTING, I COULD STACK THE ODDS THAT RECOVERY FOR MY MEN AND A SAFE EXODUS WERE ACHIEVABLE"**
>
> **Colonel Robert L Howard to *Soldier of Fortune* magazine**

Dazed again, Howard recovered and realised the situation was dire. He continued to drag the officer to safety and shouted instructions to his disorganised platoon.

A defensive perimeter was established as Howard crawled from one position to another, encouraging the men and directing their fire. He obtained a .45-calibre pistol from another sergeant and took aim at the shadowy enemy, all the while exposed to return fire. Howard's command endured three-and-a-half hours of intense combat, much of it at close quarter. One North Vietnamese soldier leaped forward and thrust his bayonet at Howard, who shot him dead just in time. Soon the sergeant called in an airstrike to beat back the onslaught, ordering his men to deploy strobe lights as a recognition signal to minimise the possibility of friendly fire casualties from above.

When helicopters arrived to extract Hatchet Force, Howard was the last man to step from the battlefield – bloodied but unbowed.

Word of the brutal firefight of 30 December 1968 reached higher levels of command and Howard was recommended for the Medal of Honor. Hospitalised, he was determined to rejoin his unit and a few days later appeared on base – in his pajamas – to the news that he would receive the coveted award.

Colonel Robert L Howard received the Medal of Honor and other decorations for valour during the Vietnam War

© Alamy

Special operations warrior

Howard's Medal of Honor was presented by President Richard Nixon in a ceremony at the White House in Washington, DC, on 2 March 1971, more than two years after the heroic episode. But the soldier had little concern for personal recognition. On numerous occasions before that fateful December fight that earned him the 'pale blue ribbon', he had demonstrated an extraordinary selflessness.

Alabama-born Robert Lewis Howard joined the army in 1956 at the age of 17 and deployed to Vietnam in 1961 with a 60-man reconnaissance company under MACV-SOG control. By the end of his personal wartime journey he had been wounded 14 times during five tours of duty, spent 54 months in a combat zone, and become one of the most highly decorated soldiers of the modern United States Army. For some, the word 'legend' is applied loosely, but for Howard it may well be an understatement.

During a 13-month period from 1967-68, Howard was recommended for the Medal of Honor on three separate occasions. Two of these were downgraded to the Silver Star and the Distinguished Service Cross, but these accounts of his heroism are no less deserving of the Medal of Honor. In hindsight, the likely reasons for the downgrades had to do with the veil of secrecy surrounding the fact that covert US operations were ongoing in Cambodia and Laos.

"HIS UNSHAKABLE COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM, DISPLAYED IN COUNTLESS EPISODES OF BATTLEFIELD GALLANTRY, LIVES ON IN THE ACTIONS OF OUR MILITARY MEN AND WOMEN WHO CONTINUE TO SERVE"

Texas Governor Rick Perry at Colonel Howard's funeral, 22 February 2010

In recognition of his outstanding leadership and courage, Howard received a direct promotion from master sergeant to 1st lieutenant in December 1969, and he retired from the army with the rank of colonel in 1992 after 36 years of service. Through the course of his deployment in Vietnam, Howard received the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, four Bronze Stars, eight Purple Hearts and numerous other decorations from the US, French, South Korean and South Vietnamese governments.

The litany of his courageous deeds almost defies description. Howard's Distinguished Service Cross was awarded for actions on 21 November, 1967, when he was a special forces advisor on a joint US-Vietnamese mission in southeastern Laos along the Vietnamese frontier. The discovery of a cache of enemy weapons and supplies led to a blistering fight with North Vietnamese soldiers, some of them manning a strong bunker complex.

As Howard and several other soldiers provided perimeter security during the demolition of the cache, he encountered four North Vietnamese soldiers, gunning them down with a burst from his M-16. The surrounding jungle erupted with enemy small-arms fire, and a nearby enemy machine gun was particularly troublesome. Howard crawled toward the machine-gun nest, killing an enemy sniper along the way. He then mowed down the entire North Vietnamese gun crew.

Medal of Honor recipients Colonel Howard (right) and Command Sergeant Major Gary Littrell sign a 2,000lb guided bomb in Southwest Asia

Colonel Howard (centre) stands with fellow Medal of Honor recipients Captain John McGinty (left) and Command Sergeant Major Gary Littrell (right)

***Right:** Colonel Howard speaks to soldiers at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation building, Al Asad, Iraq, in April 2006*

Colonel Howard and fellow Medal of Honor recipient Command Sergeant Major Gary Littrell (centre right) in Southeast asia

All images: Wiki / PD / Gov

When a second machine gun began firing from another bunker, Howard called in an airstrike. The position fell temporarily silent, but survivors opened fire again as Howard's men were taking up new positions directly opposite the bunker. With the blazing machine-gun barrel only six inches above his head, Howard tossed a grenade through the firing port then sprinted back toward his command and picked up a light anti-tank weapon. The machine gun spurted lead once more, but Howard stood up and fired the weapon, destroying the enemy bunker for good.

A year later in 1968, he was in the thick of the fighting for eight straight days from November 12-20, receiving the Silver Star for heroism. During an operation deep behind enemy lines, helicopters inserted his unit, which came under enemy fire before reaching the ground. Howard covered his men as they deployed in the hot LZ (landing zone), charging and killing two North Vietnamese soldiers beyond the rapidly forming perimeter.

On the night of 16 November, his platoon was assaulted by a company of North Vietnamese troops. He calmly moved among his men, continually exposing himself to enemy fire, and directed the defence. Two days later, he thwarted an ambush by two enemy companies, manoeuvring his men into crossfire positions that cut the attackers down. On the 19th, he capably commanded the platoon in yet another ambush by a North Vietnamese battalion. One helicopter was shot down as the Americans tried to evacuate, and Howard ran 150 metres to the scene, rescuing the pilot and crew from the blazing wreckage.

Three hours later, a helicopter extracted the wounded but Howard, hit twice, refused to leave. The following morning, he spotted three North Vietnamese soldiers manoeuvring to attack and killed them. Some accounts credit him with also destroying a Soviet-built PT-76 tank and decimating the crew of an enemy anti-aircraft gun during this brawl.

Other stories of Howard's heroism circulated. One witness relates that an enemy convoy rolled along a highway in Laos as his command lay alongside the road. Howard rose up, twirling an armed claymore mine over his head, and threw the explosive into a truck filled with enemy soldiers, destroying the vehicle and killing or wounding every passenger. Another time, Howard was standing in a chow line at a US base when a pair of Viet Cong infiltrators rode up on a motorcycle and threw a hand grenade. Howard grabbed an M-16 from a flustered sentry, shot the driver and then dispatched the passenger after a half-mile chase.

Post-Vietnam and beyond

After Vietnam, Howard served as the training officer at the US Army Airborne School and as a company commander in the 2nd Ranger Battalion. Later, he became officer-

***Above:** A hidden MACV-SOG reconnaissance team member took this photo of unsuspecting North Vietnamese troops on the Ho Chi Minh Trail*

in-charge of special forces training at Camp Mackall, North Carolina; commander of the Mountain Ranger Training Camp at Dahlonega, Georgia; and commander of Special Forces Detachment, Korea. He suffered the lingering effects of his multiple combat wounds and endured numerous medical procedures, and during this period raised concerns that American prisoners of war might still be detained in Vietnam.

After retiring from the army, Howard worked with the Department of Veterans Affairs for 20 years, a tireless advocate for those who had served their country. He travelled abroad to visit soldiers in Germany, Bosnia and Kosovo, and made five trips to Iraq and Afghanistan, boosting morale and relating his own combat experiences. From 2007-09, he was president of the Medal of Honor Society.

Howard passed away in Waco, Texas, of pancreatic cancer on 23 December 2009 at the age of 70. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Although the combat records of few other individuals approach that of Howard's, his story remains somewhat obscure, lesser known than other heroes. Even so, for those who are familiar with his exploits his heroism still resonates more than 50 years later.

REPUBLIC P-47D THUNDERBOLT

This Juggernaut fighter bomber tore through the Luftwaffe during the air battle over Europe

WORDS **STUART HADAWAY**

DOMINATING ENGINE

The massive Pratt & Whitney engine dominated the design of the airframe, and provided a huge amount of power. It also gave substantial protection to the pilot while conducting ground attacks.

STAGGERED FIREPOWER

The four machine guns were staggered so the ammunition trays could run behind each other into the breeches, saving space and aiding the aerodynamics.

BUBBLE COCKPIT

Rear visibility on early models was inhibited by a 'razor back' fuselage, with the top of the fuselage rising to meet the top of the canopy. On the P-47D the fuselage was cut down, and a 'bubble' canopy provided an excellent all-round field of view.

This single-seat aircraft looks like an unlikely candidate to be one of the most successful fighters and fighter bombers of the Second World War. It lacks the streamlined grace of other fighters, with its massive rotary engine creating a blunt, stubby profile – but its brute force and unstoppable power led to the nickname Juggernaut, or just Jug, among its pilots. It was fast, reliable and very rugged, able to survive a surprising amount of damage and still bring its pilot home. Its eight machine guns packed a powerful punch, and once coupled with adequate external fuel tanks it was able to escort American bombers all the way to Germany and, with the P-51 Mustang, destroy the German air force.

Based on the pre-war P-43 and P-44 designs, Republic Aviation incorporated lessons from early WWII fighting in Europe to produce the P-47 in 1940. Early models saw limited active service, but the P-47C and improved P-47D saw service across Europe, the Mediterranean, Far East and the Pacific theatres. A total of 15,683 were built.

Formation of P-47Ds, 1944

© Getty

REPUBLIC P-47D THUNDERBOLT

COMMISSIONED	1940
ORIGIN	USA
LENGTH	11M (36FT 1IN)
WINGSPAN	12.4M (40FT 9IN)
ENGINE	1 X PRATT & WHITNEY R-2880-21 1,500KW (2,000HP)
CREW	1
PRIMARY WEAPON	8 X 12.7MM (0.5IN) MACHINE GUNS
SECONDARY WEAPON	BOMBS AND ROCKET PROJECTILES

Illustration: Nicholas Forder

P-47 escorts USAAF B-17 bombers over Germany

© Getty

SEMI-DETACHED TURBOSUPERCHARGER

The turbosupercharger, its exhausts and cooling ducts were all fitted in the fuselage behind the cockpit, with pipes running forward to connect to the engine.

"IT WAS FAST, RELIABLE AND VERY RUGGED, ABLE TO SURVIVE A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF DAMAGE AND STILL BRING ITS PILOT HOME"

ARMAMENT

The Thunderbolt was heavily armed, with eight 12.7mm (0.5in) machine guns. To retain the wing's aerodynamic shape, the ammunition (267 rounds per gun) was in flat, parallel troughs laid directly out towards the wing tips. The guns were staggered to allow the trays to pass behind each other. Once the wings were strengthened and fitted for drop tanks, the fittings could also be used for a single 227kg (500lb) or 454kg (1,000lb) bomb or a pod of five 4.5in rockets under each wing, and a 227kg bomb under the fuselage.

The P-47's ammunition was held in long trays rather than the usual box magazines

"THE THUNDERBOLT WAS HEAVILY ARMED, WITH EIGHT 12.7MM (0.5IN) MACHINE GUNS"

Squat, business-like and as tough as nails: the P-47C had a no-nonsense and practical design, with high 'razor-back' fuselage

DESIGN

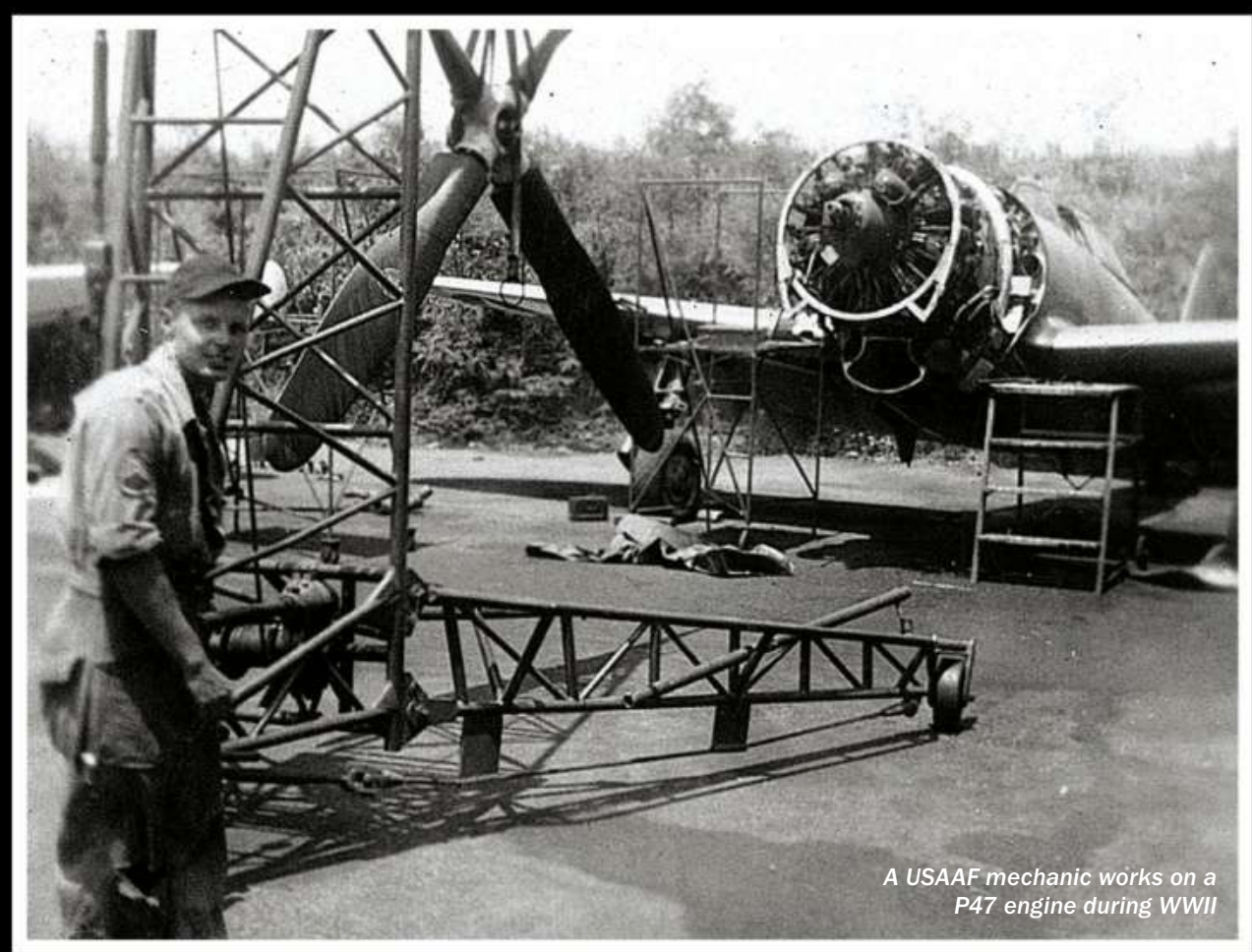
The P-47 had a semi-monocoque fuselage with all-metal stressed skin, with two main spars supporting semi-elliptical cantilever wings. The design was largely dictated by the massive engine and the four guns in each wing. Even the undercarriage had to be telescoping so it was long enough to provide clearance for the 4m (13ft) diameter propellers (needed to absorb the power of the engine), while also short enough to fit in the wing without reducing space for guns or ammunition.

© Getty

***Right:** The improved P-47D, with larger fuel tanks and a 'bubble' canopy*

ENGINE

The Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp series is one of the most successful rotary engines ever designed, being used in over 140 types of aircraft. The large 18 cylinder twin-row engine was rugged, reliable and could take heavy damage without catastrophic failure. A turbosupercharger was attached but was located in the rear fuselage, with the piping running backwards and forwards either side of the cockpit. A water injector was fitted on later models, which could boost power by 15 percent for 15 minutes.



A USAAF mechanic works on a P47 engine during WWII

All images © Alamy unless stated otherwise

COCKPIT

The Thunderbolt's cockpit sat high, giving the pilot an excellent forward and side view, but early versions had the rear view blocked by the 'razorback' fuselage design. The P-47D had a 'tear drop' or 'bubble' cockpit, giving a clear all-round view. The pilot was protected by armour to the front and rear, and the windscreen was also armoured. The cockpit was well laid out yet had a few foibles, for example the fuel gauges and stopcocks operating the drop tanks and internal fuel sources were hard to manipulate.

***Above:** A pilot of the 318th Fighter Group in his P-47 Thunderbolt*

"THE THUNDERBOLT'S COCKPIT SAT HIGH, GIVING THE PILOT AN EXCELLENT FORWARD AND SIDE VIEW"

Colonel Don Blakeslee in his cockpit, showing how high the P-47s pilot sat, with good fields of view

SERVICE HISTORY

The P-47A entered service in 1942 but was soon replaced by the P-47B, which the US Army Air Force (USAAF) took to Britain, first seeing operations in April 1943. After a few teething problems the improved P-47C soon followed with drop tanks and a longer range, able to escort bombers all the way to Germany. The P-47D is considered to be the ultimate mark, entering service in late 1943 with a 'bubble' cockpit and water-injected engine. Over 130 USAAF squadrons used the type across the different combat theatres, while in early 1944 the Royal Air Force and Indian Air Force began to receive the type in Burma, where they were used extensively for ground attack.

The P-47 was also operated by the Free French, Brazilian and Mexican air forces in combat during the Second World War, and post-war spread across South America and the Far East. The Thunderbolt left US service in 1955.

***Right:** A P-47 burns on the airfield, somewhere in Normandy, France, 1944*

RAF P-47s take off in Burma, 1944

All images © Alamy

MAN THE CANNONS AND PREPARE TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY!

Climb aboard the most formidable warships in history and immerse yourself in famous battles from Salamis to Midway, meet the admirals who revolutionised war at sea and find out how the fleets of the future are taking shape

FUTURE

Ordering is easy. Go online at:

magazinesdirect.com

Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents

HOME FRONT

74 WE HAVE WAYS FEST 2022

The hugely popular military history festival is back: co-founder Al Murray reveals what to expect this year

68
Q&A: historian Anthony Tucker-Jones

72
WWII this month: July 1942

82
Artefact of War: The York Helmet

Follow History of War: FACEBOOK /HistoryofWarMag TWITTER @HistoryofWarMag

HITLER'S WINTER

Q+A WITH ANTHONY TUCKER-JONES

The acclaimed historian and **History of War** contributor discusses his latest book, which focuses on the Battle of the Bulge – the Third Reich's last roll of the dice in the winter of 1944-45

Why did you choose to focus on the German perspective of the battle?

The German perspective always seemed far more exciting and intriguing to me. What made Hitler risk everything with that last throw of the dice? Many years ago I wrote a book on the battle for Falaise in Normandy from the viewpoint of the panzer divisions. Hitler's Ardennes offensive was a direct result of their escape from the Falaise pocket. Although they lost all their panzers, over 90,000 panzertruppen got away to fight another day.

The Battle of the Bulge, as it became known, has remained a source of public fascination ever since the terrible 1960s movie of the same name. Most studies, though, tend to focus on the Allied response, particularly the heroic American defence of Bastogne and General Patton dramatically riding to the rescue. What people don't realise is that Hitler launched four very different operations on the Western Front in the winter of 1944-45 and I was keen to explore how these all fitted together. These consisted of the ground offensive in the Ardennes, with Antwerp as its goal; the massed air offensive against Allied air fields in northern Europe; the V-weapons offensive against Antwerp; and the offensive in the Alsace that was intended to recapture Strasbourg. These are what really informed my title *Hitler's Winter*.

Furthermore, I was fascinated by the special forces operations conducted in the Ardennes. There was Otto Skorzeny's 150th Panzer Brigade masquerading as Americans, plus his commandos again disguised as Americans and the extremely ill-fated airborne operation led by [Friedrich] von der Heydte.

In your view did the Waffen-SS and German Army generals in the Ardennes offensive really believe the attack would succeed?

Post-war debriefs with the German generals showed that most of them were against it. My suspicion was that their objections were made with the benefit of hindsight and as a deliberate ploy to distance themselves from Hitler and the Nazi Party.

General Sepp Dietrich was particularly guilty of such a move as he had been one of Hitler's right-hand men from the very beginning. However, once I began to research things more deeply I began to appreciate that Hitler's generals really were opposed from the very start. They assessed what Hitler was proposing was simply too ambitious. They knew even if by some miracle they reached Antwerp they simply did not have the resources to hold it.

Hitler had a number of other options on the table in late 1944, none of which were as risky as his Ardennes gamble. General Heinz Guderian, who was the German chief of staff by this stage, felt Hitler should concentrate all his resources defending the Rhine and the Oder. In particular defence of the latter was vital to hold the ever-encroaching Red Army at bay. In the west, other than sitting on the Rhine, Hitler had what was dubbed the small and large solutions. The former envisaged a modest operation against the American breakthrough at the German city of Aachen, which could nip off the

German troops make their way past burning American vehicles during the winter offensive

American bulge in the front line. The latter was a full-blown dash for Antwerp in order to deny its vital docks to the Allied war effort and to split the British and American armies.

Was the Wehrmacht capable of achieving any sort of victory in the west at this point?
Yes, the Wehrmacht was most certainly capable of achieving a limited victory in the west. Albert Speer's efforts, as Nazi munitions minister, to rejuvenate the German armies after their series of catastrophic defeats on the Eastern and Western Fronts as well as in North Africa was nothing short of a miracle. All the panzer units that escaped Normandy were painstakingly re-equipped. Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, who was in charge of the Replacement Army, created all these new infantry units known as Volksgrenadier divisions. The upshot was that Hitler had two very powerful panzer armies on the Western Front by the winter of 1944 capable of delivering a serious blow to the Allies.

Likewise, the Luftwaffe was still a force to be reckoned with. It had all these jet fighter and bomber programmes underway that offered it a new qualitative edge over the Allies. The problem was that none of them were really ready by the end of 1944. Nevertheless, the Luftwaffe was keen to deliver a knockout blow against the Allies, but its preferred target was America's bomber fleet. It was hoped that if they shot down enough aircraft in one go this would cause the Americans to pause with their relentless daylight raids.

"HITLER HAD A NUMBER OF OTHER OPTIONS ON THE TABLE IN LATE 1944, NONE OF WHICH WERE AS RISKY AS HIS ARDENNES GAMBLE"

German tank crewmen are briefed during the offensive, December 1944

The Ardennes was the Wehrmacht's first large-scale winter offensive – did its inexperience at that level make a big difference?
Most definitely. By the close of 1944 the Wehrmacht forces were absolute masters of defensive warfare. They had escaped the British and Americans in France then restored the front and had held the advancing Red Army before Warsaw. In Italy their defence denied Rome to the Allies until June 1944. In contrast, its last major offensive had been in the summer of 1943 at Kursk and that had ended in defeat. This had destroyed Hitler's remaining strategic offensive power. In the winter of 1943 the Wehrmacht had launched an offensive to relieve the German 6th Army trapped at Stalingrad. It had been conducted with insufficient strength and in the most appalling weather conditions. It also ended in failure and 6th Army was forced to capitulate.

The Germans' main problem with their Ardennes offensive was time. They simply did not have enough time to plan and prepare adequately. It essentially turned into a rushed job. The special operations had just a matter of weeks to get ready. Both Skorzeny and von der Heydte's forces were woefully small and ill-equipped. The panzer forces did not have the opportunity to map their routes. Furthermore, the American and British armies that the German assault force would have to fight were vastly different to the forces it had encountered in 1940. Hitler was gambling there would be two weeks of bad weather that would ground the Allied air forces and allow him to advance rapidly using the element of surprise.

Should Hasso von Manteuffel and his army have been given the lead role in the Ardennes?
The challenge that the 5th and 6th Panzer armies had, under von Manteuffel and Sepp

Images © Getty

These captured SS troops were suspected of killing Allied POWs during the Battle of the Bulge

Dietrich respectively, was that they were fighting on a too-narrow frontage. Dietrich's army in the north, with all the veteran SS-Panzer divisions, was nearest to Liege on the Meuse and therefore had a shorter line of advance to Antwerp. However, the Americans on the German northern shoulder held and as a result Dietrich's and von Manteuffel's forces converged and found themselves using the same roads, causing delays and chaos. Furthermore, General Brandenberger's 7th Army to the south was too weak to keep the Americans pinned down on the southern shoulder of the German breakthrough. This meant Patton could rapidly reach Bastogne.

Why was holding Bastogne so important?
The town of Bastogne in military terms represented a very dangerous choke point. Both the Germans and the Americans knew that it was a vital communications hub dominating all the major roads in the Ardennes. The Americans, though, beat the Germans to it and held onto Bastogne. The Germans tried to overwhelm the garrison but did not have the strength with which to do so, also they then had to fend off Patton cutting his way north to the town. The bitter fighting for Bastogne became an unwanted distraction for the Germans and derailed their tight timetable even more. Once the weather cleared the Americans were able to resupply Bastogne by air and attack the exposed German ground forces. Patton's arrival meant that the Germans had to fight on multiple fronts and were unable to sever his relief corridor.

"IF ANYONE RODE TO THE RESCUE IT WAS PATTON'S US 4TH ARMORED DIVISION, WHICH CUT ITS WAY INTO BASTOGNE IN THE FACE OF FIERCE RESISTANCE AND UNHINGED THE ENTIRE GERMAN ADVANCE"

Back in 1940 the German Army had successfully navigated the Ardennes region to land a killer blow against the French. Why couldn't it do the same in 1944?
Hitler's Blitzkrieg in 1940 easily sliced through French defences in the Ardennes. At the time everyone thought such a move was impossible because of the mountainous and forested terrain. Even respected British military thinker Basil Liddell Hart in his book *The Defence of Britain* concluded the year before that large-scale operations in that area were impossible. General Heinz Guderian, the father of Hitler's panzer force, thought otherwise – he believed armour could move through the rough countryside. The dense woodlands would permit his panzers to move secretly and then break out into the flat land beyond. Guderian soon learned on 10 May 1940 that his advance was more about traffic control than fighting. The steep slopes, twisting roads, dense woods and inadequate bridges all made life very difficult. Nonetheless, he pulled it off.

In 1944 the Germans were operating on a much narrower frontage involving just two armies, and in the winter, whereas in 1940 their assault involved five in the springtime. During the latter German thrusts were also made north of the Ardennes towards Rotterdam

A US soldier escorts three German prisoners captured during the fight for Bastogne in Belgium, December 1944

Images © Getty

and Maastricht, which neutralised both Belgium and the Netherlands. Notably, Guderian struck southwest to Sedan to unhinge French defences and not north to Antwerp. The poor roads, lack of bridging equipment, critical fuel shortages and bad weather thwarted Dietrich and von Manteuffel's advance as much as American resistance.

Did any German senior commander distinguish themselves during the Ardennes offensive, or was their performance below par?
I got a very strong sense researching this book that the senior German commanders were not really invested in the operation. None of them particularly shone – drive and initiative seemed lacking, though von Manteuffel did all he could to urge his men on along the impossible roads.

My view is that Dietrich was promoted way above his abilities; he certainly did not want to command of 6th Panzer Army, which was a post bestowed upon him by Hitler. He was a corps commander through and through – not an army commander. Furthermore, his morale dropped further once he knew what was being asked of him. Skorzeny and Jochen Peiper conducted themselves with some distinction: Skorzeny when his original mission became impossible fought on even though he was wounded; Pieper, when he ran out of fuel, managed to extricate the survivors of his beleaguered spearhead battle group.

In your view was the Ardennes the American Army's greatest victory in the European war?
No. The US Army's greatest victory in Europe has to be its incredibly hard-won breakout from the Normandy bridgehead, the defeat of the German counterattack at Mortain and Patton's subsequent sweep to the Seine facilitating the liberation of Paris. American troops went through the meat grinder in the Normandy bocage. It was their sacrifice that sowed the seeds for the Falaise pocket, which trapped much of the German Army in northern France, and for the Allied advance to the Rhine.

However, among Hitler's many failings when it came to the Ardennes he grossly underestimated the Americans. He seemed to ignore the dogged determination they had shown in Normandy and Brittany. The American divisions in the Ardennes were either green, having just arrived in Europe, or were recuperating. Hitler assumed they were all of low quality and would flee when the panzers rolled. Shamefully this certainly happened in some cases, but where it counted they held. Ironically, the Americans turned German tactics against them by employing battle groups, or kampfgruppen. Disparate units were cobbled together, often armed with just light anti-tank guns and bazookas, to hold the German advance long enough for reinforcements to be summoned.

What role did the British play in the Ardennes?
Field Marshal Montgomery's role was to organise the defence of the Meuse in the event of the Germans reaching the river and threatening Antwerp and Brussels. His 30th Corps also helped out on the northern flank with the reduction of the German bulge and the push on Houffalize. However, it is very important to remember that the bulk of the fighting was done by the Americans. Montgomery subsequently got himself in deep trouble by saying to the press that he had ridden to the Americans' rescue.

Furthermore Montgomery, blind to the politics of the situation, asked General Eisenhower, the Allied supreme commander, for control of General Bradley's US 12th Army Group. Eisenhower was so incensed by both actions that he was on the verge of resigning if Monty was not sacked immediately. Luckily, Monty apologised for overstepping his authority and the situation was defused. If anyone rode to the rescue it was Patton's US 4th Armored Division, which cut its way into Bastogne in the face of fierce resistance and unhinged the entire German advance. The result was that by the end of January 1945 the Germans were back where they'd started.

Would you agree that Nordwind is the Wehrmacht's 'forgotten offensive'?
Operation North Wind is very much the Wehrmacht's forgotten offensive, because it was conducted in the shadow of the fighting in the Ardennes. In principle it was a sound operation designed to drive a wedge between the American and French armies and retake Strasbourg. The problem was it did not commence until over two weeks after the Ardennes offensive started, so did nothing to alleviate the pressure on the German salient. Exactly the same thing happened with Operation Baseplate, the Luftwaffe's massed strike on Allied air fields – it did not happen until the New Year. The result was that neither had any impact on the fighting in the Ardennes. Similarly, Hitler's V-2 attacks on Antwerp failed to have the desired effect and did little damage to the docks.

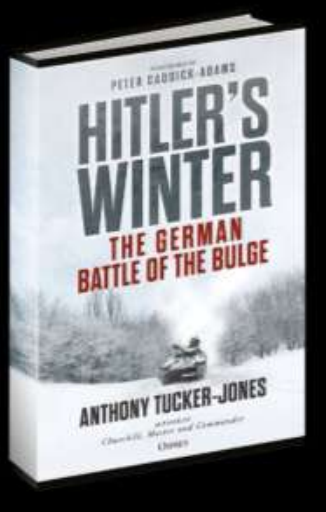
Hitler, in the case of Operation North Wind, underestimated the French just as he had the Americans. He assumed the French Army would abandon Strasbourg once under threat. He did not factor in French honour. General Charles de Gaulle made it clear to Eisenhower that he would rather fight to the death than relinquish a recently liberated French city. In the end Hitler's Alsace operation lost momentum and fatally weakened the German position in the Colmar pocket on the west bank of the Rhine. North Wind in strategic terms proved to be little more than a nuisance and became a forgotten historical footnote along with Baseplate and the V-2 attacks.

The last-ditch Nazi offensive was rushed into action and suffered from inadequate planning and preparation

DOWNLOAD A FREE 10-PAGE PREVIEW OF ANTHONY'S NEW BOOK *HITLER'S WINTER*

***Hitler's Winter: The German Battle of the Bulge*, available now from Osprey Publishing, explores the German perspective of the Nazis' final major offensive in the European theatre. History of War readers can access an exclusive 10-page preview of *Hitler's Winter* – see below for details**

OSPREY PUBLISHING



SCAN HERE OR VISIT bit.ly/ATJWAR TO DOWNLOAD TODAY

www.ospreypublishing.com

WWII THIS MONTH...

JULY 1942

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

© Getty

FIRST BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN

Fought during 1-27 July, the First Battle of El Alamein was part of the Western Desert Campaign in North Africa. German-Italian forces commanded by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel fought the Allied British Eighth Army led by General Claude Auchinleck.

Located only 106km from Alexandria, El Alamein was dangerously close to Allied ports and bases in Egypt that protected the Suez Canal. Rommel's 96,000 troops (most of whom were Italian) failed to break through the defences of Auchinleck's 150,000-strong force, largely because of logistical problems.

Allied casualties were 13,250 compared to Axis losses of 17,000. Although much less famous than the Second Battle of El Alamein in October-November 1942, the first battle halted an Axis advance into Egypt.

"EL ALAMEIN WAS DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO ALLIED PORTS AND BASES IN EGYPT THAT PROTECTED THE SUEZ CANAL"

© Getty

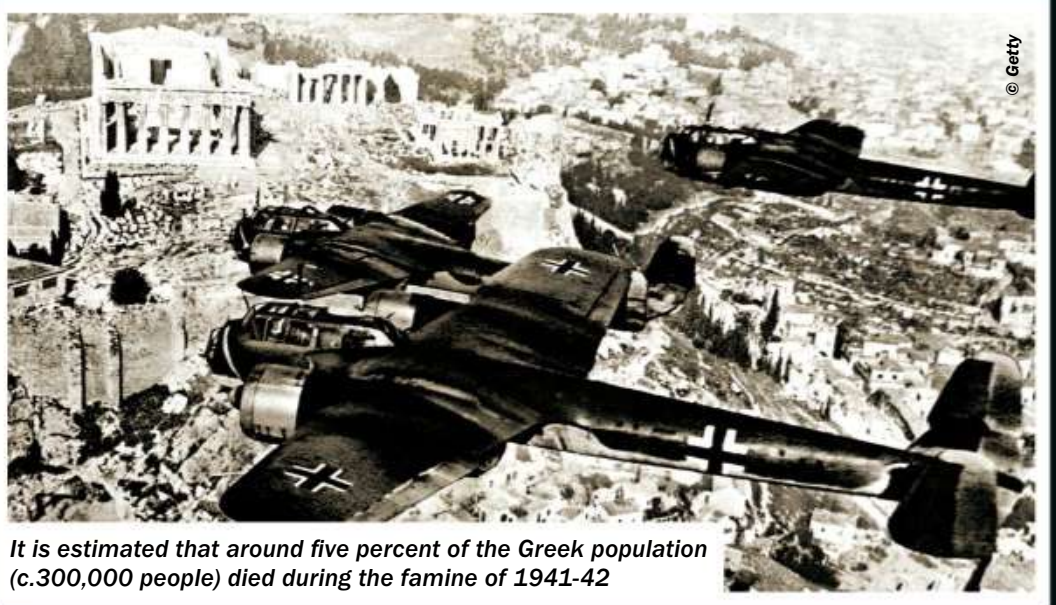
The Me 262 was nicknamed 'Schwalbe' ('Swallow') with its pilots claiming to have shot down over 500 Allied aircraft

JET POWER GOES TO WAR

The Messerschmitt Me 262, the world's first operational jet fighter aircraft, was first flown with a jet engine on 18 July. Originally flown with a piston engine on 18 April 1941, the Me 262's flight on 18 July was test piloted by Friedrich Wendel from the Bavarian town of Leipheim.

Despite the fact that the turbojet engine had been patented in 1930 by RAF officer Frank Whittle, it was the Luftwaffe who won the arms race for a fighter jet. The Me 262 was faster and more heavily armed than any Allied fighter and could provide light bombing, reconnaissance and night-fighter roles. Its maiden jet flight occurred nine months before the Gloster Meteor, which was the RAF's first jet fighter.

A British Royal Artillery 25-pounder gun duels with the Afrika Korps at El Alamein, July 1942



© Getty

It is estimated that around five percent of the Greek population (c.300,000 people) died during the famine of 1941-42

OXFAM IS FOUNDED

Founded in Oxford on 31 July 1942, the international charity Oxfam began as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief. Organised by a group of Quakers, social activists and Oxford academics, the committee aimed to send food supplies to help starving citizens in occupied Greece.

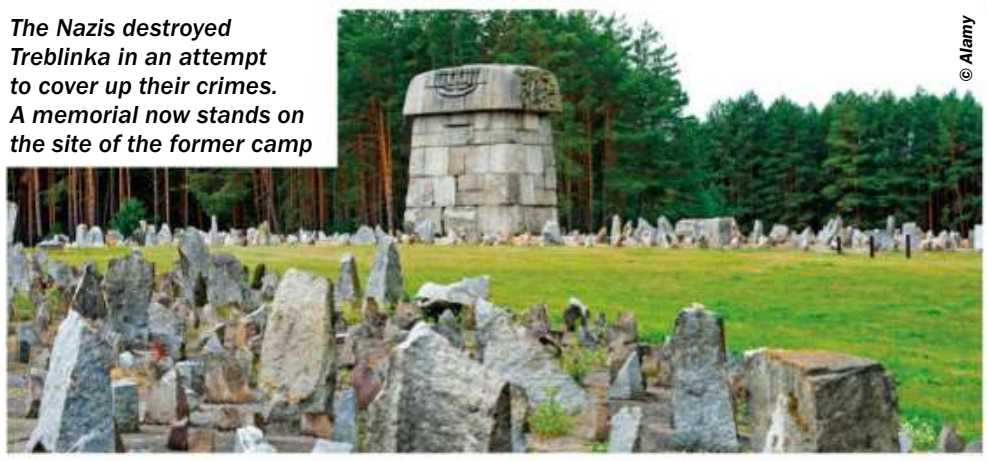
Known as the 'Great Famine', Greek civilians suffered a severe shortage of food during 1941-42 through a combination of Axis plundering and an Allied naval blockade. The Oxford Committee campaigned for food relief supplies for starving women and children to go through the blockade.

TREBLINKA BEGINS EXTERMINATIONS

On 23 July 1942, the gas chambers at Treblinka extermination camp northeast of Warsaw began operating. Unlike Auschwitz, where prisoners were sometimes diverted to hard labour, Treblinka was constructed to exclusively kill people.

During its first operational day on 23 July, the camp's staff killed 6,500 Jews who were newly arrived by train from the Warsaw Ghetto. Before it was dismantled after a prisoner revolt in October 1943, it is estimated that approximately 870,000 people were murdered at Treblinka.

The Nazis destroyed Treblinka in an attempt to cover up their crimes. A memorial now stands on the site of the former camp



© Alamy

ANNE FRANK GOES INTO HIDING

On 6 July, Anne Frank and her family went into hiding in Amsterdam. The move was prompted the day before when Anne's elder sister Margot was called up by the Nazi authorities to report to a labour camp in Germany. The girls' parents, Otto and Edith, had anticipated the call-up, with Otto arranging for the family to hide in a specially created annex at his business premises on central Amsterdam's Prinsengracht canal.

When the Franks left their home, they told a neighbour they were going to Switzerland. In reality, they hid in the annex until they were arrested by the Gestapo in August 1944. Anne wrote much of her famous diary there and wrote a few days after they went into hiding: "Of course we are not allowed to look out of the window at all or go outside. Also, we have to do everything softly in case they hear us below."

Anne Frank pictured in 1942

© Alamy

MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Learn about restoration work to a Dunkirk painting at Churchill's former house, the UK's top WWII festival, an exhibition on children of service personnel, and the opening of the Wrens Museum

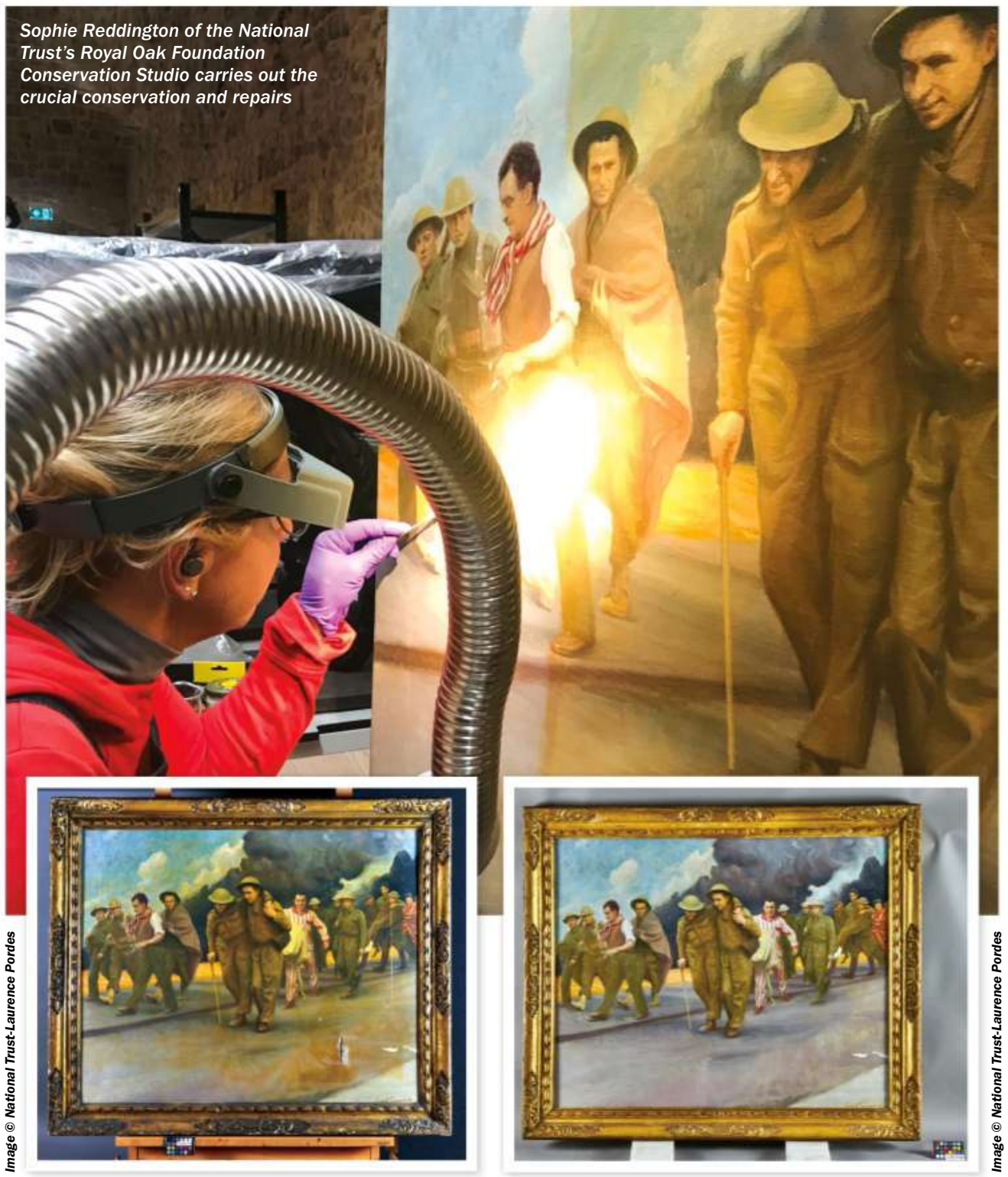
Churchill's Dunkirk evacuation painting restoration

After around 100 hours of conservation work, a painting of the Dunkirk evacuation has gone on public display at the National Trust's Chartwell

Located near Westerham, Kent, Chartwell is the former home of Sir Winston Churchill and present-day National Trust property. The house has long highlighted the life of Britain's most iconic wartime leader and now, following extensive conservation work, it has put on public display a painting of the Dunkirk evacuation once owned by the late prime minister.

The oil canvas piece, created by artist Ernest Townsend and gifted to Churchill by the painter's son after the war, depicts several of the 300,000 soldiers who, in May and June 1940, were rescued from France after the Nazi invasion. Churchill said he was "honoured to accept" the present at a time when such an influx of similar offers meant that he had to turn others down. Received in 1947, the fact that he had been writing about the Dunkirk operation in his book *The Second World War, Volume 2: Their Finest Hour* might have influenced his decision. The painting was eventually hung in Chartwell. However, at some point it sustained a 10cm tear, while the varnish experienced yellowing from age.

Approximately 100 hours of painstaking cleaning and repairs, carried out by the National Trust's Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio at Knole in Kent, have since restored the artwork to its former glory. Paintings conservator Sophie Reddington says: "The threads were re-woven with a surgical needle and then secured with adhesive – in a similar way to how wounds are treated with sutures… It is also always hugely satisfying removing old varnish layers from paint surfaces when they have discoloured badly over time. Often paintings have lost their original colours and dimensional appearance. Removing aged varnish layers is like bringing a painting back to life, and this painting looks transformed."



Sophie Reddington of the National Trust's Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio carries out the crucial conservation and repairs

Image © National Trust-Emma Schmuecker

Image © National Trust-Laurence Pordes

Pictured here before the restoration work, a tear is visible in the yellowing canvas

Image © National Trust-Laurence Pordes

The canvas after completion of the conservation work

The Dunkirk canvas has been hung on Chartwell's staircase landing for all visitors to admire and appreciate. Its poignant positioning beside Roy Nockolds' *Some of the Few* – an artistic depiction of Hawker Hurricanes during the Battle of Britain – serves as a reminder of Churchill's role in two defining struggles of the Second World War.

National Trust Chartwell's curator Katherine Carter comments: "Churchill's 'we shall fight on the beaches' speech has gone down in history among the greatest wartime orations. So we are delighted that we have been able to conserve and finally display such an important symbol of his legacy at his former home… as part of a renewed focus on the story we tell at Chartwell of Churchill and his role as a wartime leader."

For more information visit: nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell

WE HAVE WAYS FEST 2022

Comedian and historian Al Murray discusses the return of Britain's premier WWII festival that sprang from his successful history podcast

Taking place between 22-24 July 2022 at the Blackpit Brewery in Buckinghamshire, *We Have Ways Fest* is Britain's number-one Second World War festival. A packed weekend full of entertainment for all the family, it includes an exciting combination of incredible displays of military hardware and fascinating historical talks and debates.

Back for its second year, the festival has its origins in the hugely successful podcast *We Have Ways of Making You Talk*, which is co-hosted by bestselling author and broadcaster James Holland with award-wining comedian and keen historian Al Murray. Since its launch three years ago, the podcast has been downloaded 20 million times and is one of the biggest podcasts in the UK.

We Have Ways Fest includes more than 50 talks and discussions, including with Jack Mann, one of the last surviving WWII members of the Long Range Desert Group, SAS and SBS. Maurice Blik, a Holocaust survivor, will also discuss how he survived Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a child to become an internationally renowned sculptor.

There are also additional talks with Katrin Himmler, a German author and political scientist who is also the great-niece of Heinrich Himmler, as well as distinguished historians such as Sir Max Hastings and Professor Saul David.

Murray, who describes the festival as consisting of "talks, tanks and tankards, but not necessarily in that order", tells **History of War** about the variety of events on offer, the importance of survivors' testimonies and his enthusiasm for wartime artillery pieces.

***Below:** Two women lie on top of a Red Cross truck nicknamed 'Betty Swallocks'*

***Below:** We Have Ways Fest will feature exclusive displays of original WWII military hardware, including a late-night firing session*

To purchase tickets visit: wehavewaysfest.co.uk

To listen and subscribe to the *We Have Ways of Making You Talk* podcast visit: wehavewayspod.com

Images © Stuart Bertie

What is the premise of the We Have Ways of Making You Talk podcast?
The idea is that James and I are (essentially) sat in the pub talking about the Second World War. Knowing a WWII historian is total catnip for me because I've been interested in the subject all my life. As it's progressed it's been like doing a Masters' degree in the Second World War.

What can visitors experience at the festival?
We have talks: 50 speakers, from Sir Max Hastings to Rana Mitter, as well as listeners who have become keen historians in the wake of the podcast. As well as the talks there's living history and gear. This includes tanks, guns, carriers, keeps, and demonstrations of the kit and how it was used. And there's a bar…

There is an impressive range of academics and authors who will be attending the festival. What variety of topics will they be discussing?
All sorts of everything. The Second World War is a vast onion – it is multi-layered and no matter how much you peel there's always more. Churchill, the war in the Far East, China, the legacy of Nazi Germany (Katrin Himmler will be telling us what it's like having that surname), war planes, family stories, the Holocaust, the central importance of logistics – and tons more.

Which event are you most looking forward to at the festival?
Meeting the [podcast] listeners was the highlight of last year. I'm looking forward to more of that.

Do you have a favourite piece of wartime military hardware that will be on display?
The Garrison Volunteers run a battery of 25-pounder guns, and use the drills and skills that were employed in Normandy. Seeing them arriving with their Quad gun tractors and limbers, setting up and firing their guns is thrilling.

The festival includes talks with WWII veterans and survivors. As the war diminishes from living memory, how important are their testimonies for educating younger generations?
They're absolutely important. The war in living memory is beginning to fade and suddenly this seems to be happening quickly. Having grown up with the Second World War as a large part of British culture this change is striking. The testimonies of the people that remember the war help to remind us that at one point it was happening "right now" like everything else.

Images © SOFO Museum

Children of Military Personnel Exhibition

Running until November 2022, the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum has unveiled a new exhibition that explores the lives of children whose families are in the Armed Forces

***Above:** The exhibition features numerous objects related to children's experiences of warfare, ranging from the Second World War to modern day combat*

Opened in 2014, the Soldiers of Oxfordshire (SOFO) Museum – located in Woodstock – tells the story of how conflict has affected the county and its people, from service personnel on the front lines to civilians on the Home Front. Its new exhibition, unveiled on 2 June, is continuing its work by examining the lives of children whose family members are in the British Armed Forces. The display, focusing primarily on Oxfordshire, will likewise showcase the often harrowing experiences of children who become victims of war, including the Second World War's evacuee programme and today's refugees and asylum seekers.

The SOFO Museum has partnered with two charities, Little Troopers and Brian McCarty's War Toys, to bring together the collection of objects and photos featured in the exhibition. Visitors will be able to listen to 80-year-old memories of those sent to the Oxfordshire countryside during the Blitz, see artwork created by children processing modern warfare, and come to understand the complex issues that youngsters face when separated from serving family members or moved between houses and schools for a parent's military duties.

Louise Fetigan, the founder of Little Troopers, which supports children of military personnel, says: "There are more than 100,000 children today who have parents serving in the British Armed Forces, so it's really important to represent these children and give them the opportunity to tell their story and to share their unique experiences. Military life is full of challenge, change and adventure and this exhibit offers visitors a special insight into our Armed Forces community as seen through the eyes of military children.

For more information: sofo.org.uk

Opening of the Wrens Museum

Dedicated to the history of women in the Royal Navy service, a new Wrens Museum has been opened to shed light on their vital contribution

Once the sleeping quarters of Liverpool's Western Approaches – the headquarters for the coordination of the Battle of the Atlantic from 1941 to 1945 – a new Wrens Museum has been opened to explore the contribution made by women in the Royal Navy service. The recently unveiled collection chronicles the branch from its inception in 1917 until its integration into the Royal Navy in 1993, exploring not only their service but also the individual stories involved in it and the personal experiences obtained through it.

Its placement in Western Approaches, which is today a museum unto itself, has a historical significance in that 80 percent of the former headquarters' staff were women during WWII. Their time at the Liverpool-based facility – across an expansive and critical range of roles – proved that they were equal to their male counterparts.

Olivia Lyon-Marsh, the Wrens Museum project lead, says: "It is an honour to have been able to work on this project. The Wrens are often an unknown and largely underappreciated subject – not just in the history of the Royal Navy but in the history of women as well. To be able to share their stories and experiences with audiences that may not have been aware of them, even the opportunity to give visitors an impression of the importance of their work, is very humbling and it has been a very gratifying experience. They are amazing women and I'm proud to help to tell their story." Entry is included with a Western Approaches ticket.

The Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) was established in 1917 and became integrated into the Royal Navy in 1993

Images © Big Heritage

For more information: liverpoolwarmuseum.co.uk/wrens-museum

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films

WOLF HOUND

THE STRANGE HISTORY OF THE KG 200 LUFTWAFFE UNIT THAT FLEW CAPTURED ALLIED AIRCRAFT GETS EVEN MORE SURREAL

Cast: James Maslow, Trevor Donovan, John Wells
Director: Michael B Chait
DVD release: 25 July 2022

Wolf Hound is set in 1944 German-occupied France and follows the daring exploits of Jewish-American fighter pilot Captain David Holden (Maslow). He and a fellow P-51 pilot escort a lone B-17 on a special bombing operation but are intercepted by a captured Spitfire and Hurricane flown by the Luftwaffe's KG 200 unit. In the ensuing engagement the B-17 crash lands in enemy territory, while both P-51s and the Spitfire and Hurricane are shot down.

While Holden parachutes to safety, his comrade is killed. Similarly, the German Hurricane pilot dies, but his fellow pilot survives by baling out and Holden and the German stalk each other in a cat-and-mouse escapade through a forest, which eventually sees Holden captured.

Breaking free at the KG 200 airfield where he has been taken, Holden springs the B-17 crew from captivity and an astonishing battle erupts between the Americans and dozens of German troops equipped with armoured cars and arsenals of weaponry. Somehow Holden and his gang kill all the Germans, but one remains – a particularly villainous SS officer.

Out of ammunition, the Americans capture an armoured car, seizing a Panzerfaust anti-tank weapon with which they spectacularly eliminate the SS officer. While this is going on, they fail to stop the repaired B-17 taking off for England with a deadly cargo. On board is a '007-esque' villain: a bald, manically mad Nazi professor nursing his 'baby' – an atomic bomb. But Holden is not to be deterred.

Seizing a captured B-25, he takes off in pursuit of the B-17. However, his erstwhile Spitfire adversary, a Luftwaffe 'ace', is back and flying a Messerschmitt Bf 109. Before the B-17 can be downed, Holden is badly shot up.

"FOR AVIATION ENTHUSIASTS THERE ARE SOME WONDERFUL, WELL-SHOT FLYING SEQUENCES FILLING A FULL 25 MINUTES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FILM"

Nevertheless, and despite flying a B-25, Holden gets on the 109's tail, shooting it down. Now out of ammunition, he still has to somehow down the B-17 – we won't give away the ending, but you can probably guess who emerges victorious!

A truly fanciful film with a rather silly storyline, it is all put together in a ripping *Boy's Own*-style adventure. It's a Saturday afternoon matinee romp that doesn't even attempt to give an accurate account of KG 200, whose exploits supposedly inspired the movie.

The film has every cliché in the book: villainous Germans (who inexplicably alternate between German spoken with a heavy accent or German with subtitles), lantern-jawed and stoic all-American heroes, weapons fired single-handedly from the hip with every single German killed – and usually in fireball explosions.

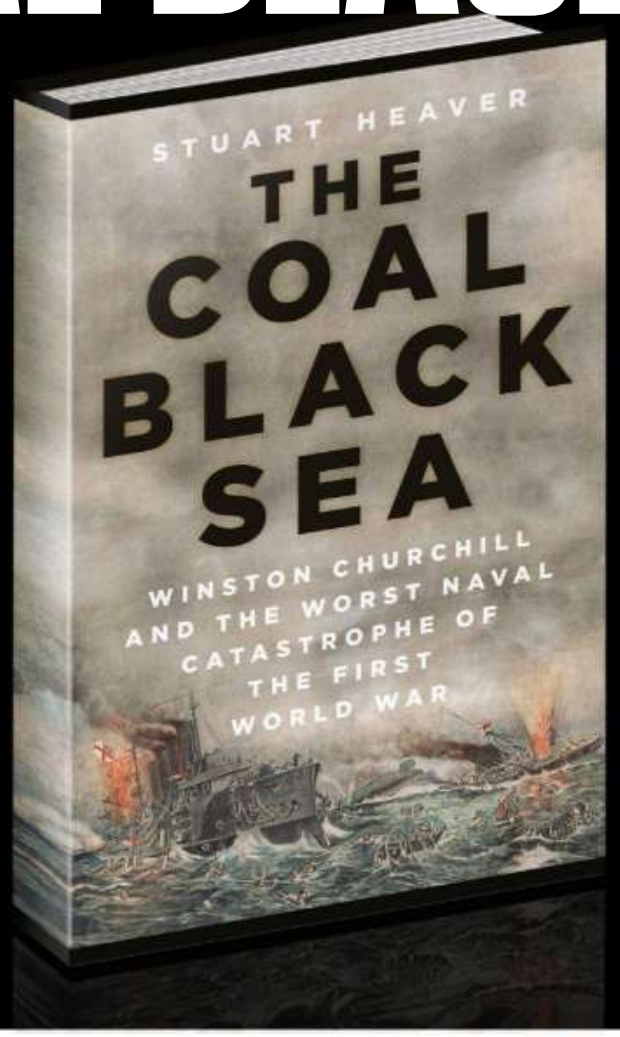
For aviation enthusiasts there are some wonderful, well-shot flying sequences filling a full 25 minutes at the beginning of the film. However, the fighter aircraft involved seem to carry limitless ammunition.

A fun piece of entertainment, it is hard to think of *Wolf Hound* as anything other than a spoof film – one that's worth a watch from that perspective alone. Yet there really was a KG 200 unit, and it flew a captured B-17 called Wulf Hound. But this, dear reader, is not that story! **AS**

THE COAL BLACK SEA

THE WORST NAVAL CATASTROPHE OF WWI TOLD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MEN SERVING ON THREE BRITISH CRUISERS SUNK BY GERMAN SUBMARINERS

Author: Stuart Heaver
Publisher: The History Press
Price: £20 (Hardback)
Released: Out now



It can safely be argued that no contemporary British statesman stands as tall in the public esteem as Winston Churchill. For five years, the prime minister's indomitable defiance of Nazi Germany inspired Britain and its armed forces to resist and eventually defeat the enemy.

Yet before the Second World War there was of course another calamitous conflict, and author Stuart Heaver brings to light one incident in WWI in which the blame for a British naval disaster was laid squarely at the feet of the First Lord of the Admiralty: Churchill.

It was not the well-documented 1915 Dardanelles campaign of ill-repute. In that year, Churchill helped orchestrate the disastrous naval operation and he was also involved in the planning of the military landings on Gallipoli, both of which saw large losses. The lesser-known calamity the author narrates took place a year earlier, when in September 1914 three Royal Navy armoured cruisers were sunk by a German U-boat with the loss of 1,459 men, nearly half the three ships' combined complement. This was a casualty list longer than that sustained by the entire British Fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar, as well as the worst naval catastrophe of the war.

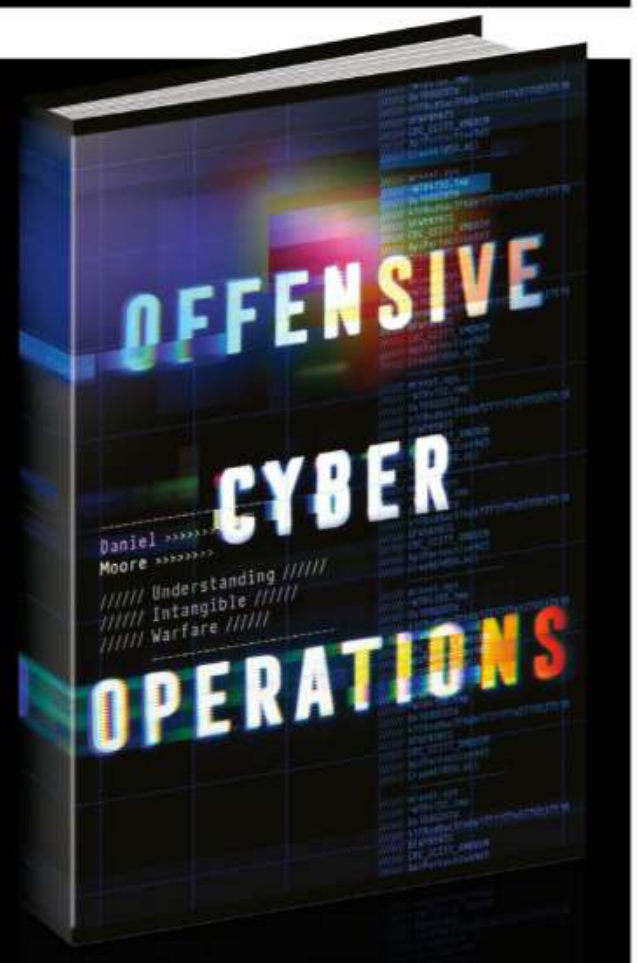
The British public reacted with shock to this blow to national morale. The episode also triggered a barrage of criticism. Curiously, few have even heard of the incident, which even today has no proper name and is not officially designated as an action by the Royal Navy.

As political pressure mounted on Churchill, the blame game became increasingly tense. The lack of preparedness for submarine warfare was signalled as a key error, yet Churchill lashed out at his critics and released a volley of spin that earned him plenty of enemies. The book stands out as a superbly researched exercise in myth-busting. **JS**

OFFENSIVE CYBER OPERATIONS

AN EXAMINATION OF THE THEORY, STRATEGY AND APPLICATION OF CYBER WARFARE, ITS USE BY GLOBAL POWERS, AND THE FUTURE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THIS HIDDEN WORLD

Author: Daniel Moore **Publisher:** Hurst **Price:** £35 (Hardback)
Released: Out now



Payloads are activated and triggers are pulled, disabling and disrupting targets – yet not a shot is heard on the battlefield. What sort of war is this? It is cyberwar, often discussed yet rarely seen, one that is turned into a variety of offensive cyber operations (OCOs). In this book Daniel Moore pieces together operational case studies, military strategy and technical analysis, bringing to light the latest incarnation of intangible conflict waged through non-physical means such as the information space or the electromagnetic spectrum.

The depth and complexity of OCOs are explained through 'presence-based' and 'event-based' operations. The former are strategic capabilities that begin with lengthy network intrusions and conclude with an offensive objective. The latter are directly activated tactical tools that can be field-deployed to immediately create localised effects. Moore sets out to explore the theory, strategy and practicalities of different OCOs. This is followed by an in-depth examination of the OCO strategy of the four major players: the US, Russia, China and Iran.

Cyber operations, the author points out, first came about from the need to deceive and manipulate the machines on which we have become reliant, when militaries in the 20th century turned to radar and the radio for communication. Network conflict therefore has its roots in this early electronic warfare and signals intelligence. Cyber is essentially their love child. The future role of artificial intelligence (AI) in military OCOs is indeterminate – as with autonomous platforms, AI systems may be targets of or a vehicle for offensive operations.

One certainty, Moore concludes, is that OCO networks will retain and increase their prevalence in all military affairs. **JS**

THE TRAITOR OF COLDITZ

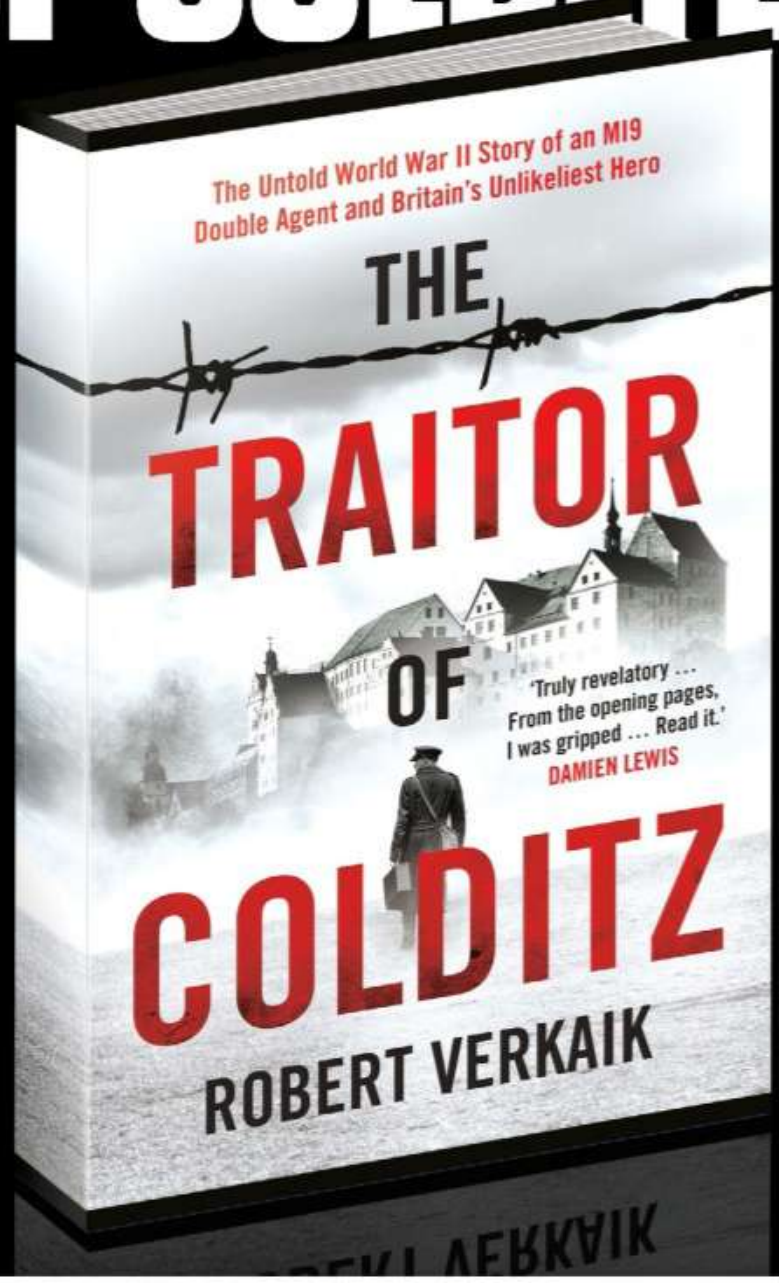
A GRIPPING TALE OF WARTIME ESPIONAGE AND COUNTERESPIONAGE

Author: Robert Verkaik **Publisher:** Welbeck
Price: £20 (hardback) **Released:** Out now

The story of Colditz is well-trodden ground, being the inspiration for numerous movies, TV series and books. Colditz Castle in Saxony was supposedly escape-proof, but the Allied prisoners held there excelled in proving otherwise. Accomplished author and journalist Robert Verkaik now brings an intriguing new spin to the tale – one of betrayal by Nazi collaborators. At the height of the Second World War the Nazis placed a double agent in Colditz to gather intelligence on British escape plans.

The operation involved Walter Purdy, a former member of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF). He had been captured in 1940 after the ship he was serving on was sunk off Norway. Rather than remain a prisoner of war he willingly sided with the enemy and became a radio broadcaster in Berlin. Purdy was eventually sent to Colditz in 1944, where he was swiftly unmasked by Captain Julius Green and almost hanged. Fortuitously Green had met Purdy before at Sandbostel prison camp so was already well aware of his fascist sympathies.

Verkaik skilfully weaves in the Nazis' ill-fated attempts to recruit British prisoners of war to fight for Germany with the British Free Corps. This likewise attracted members of the BUF. Among Verkaik's cast of villains are the infamous traitors John Amery and William Joyce who, like Purdy, served the Nazi propaganda effort. As to the fate of Purdy, you will need to read the book to find out what became of the traitor of Colditz. **ATJ**


The Untold World War II Story of an MI9 Double Agent and Britain's Unlikeliest Hero
THE
TRAITOR
OF
COLDITZ
'Truly revelatory ... From the opening pages, I was gripped ... Read it.'
DAMIEN LEWIS
ROBERT VERKAIK

"COLDITZ CASTLE IN SAXONY WAS SUPPOSEDLY ESCAPE-PROOF, BUT THE ALLIED PRISONERS HELD THERE EXCELLED IN PROVING OTHERWISE"

© Alamy

The so-called Laufen Six, named after the camp from which they escaped before being sent to Colditz

SUMMER SAVINGS

Subscribe to your new summer read today

3 issues for £/$/€3

6 issues for £6

3 issues for £/$/€3

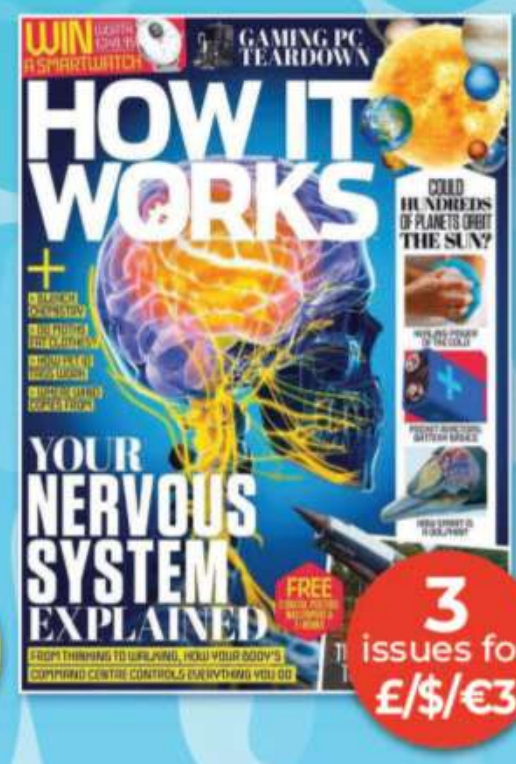
BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HOMES MAGAZIN
Ideal Home
GET colour CONFIDENT
50+ PAGES OF dream homes
FULL OF TIPS, TRICKS & SECRETS
FIND YOUR garden groove

6 issues for £6

6 issues for £6

3 issues for £/$/€3

6 issues for £6



3 issues for £/$/€3

For great savings on all of our magazines, see the entire range online

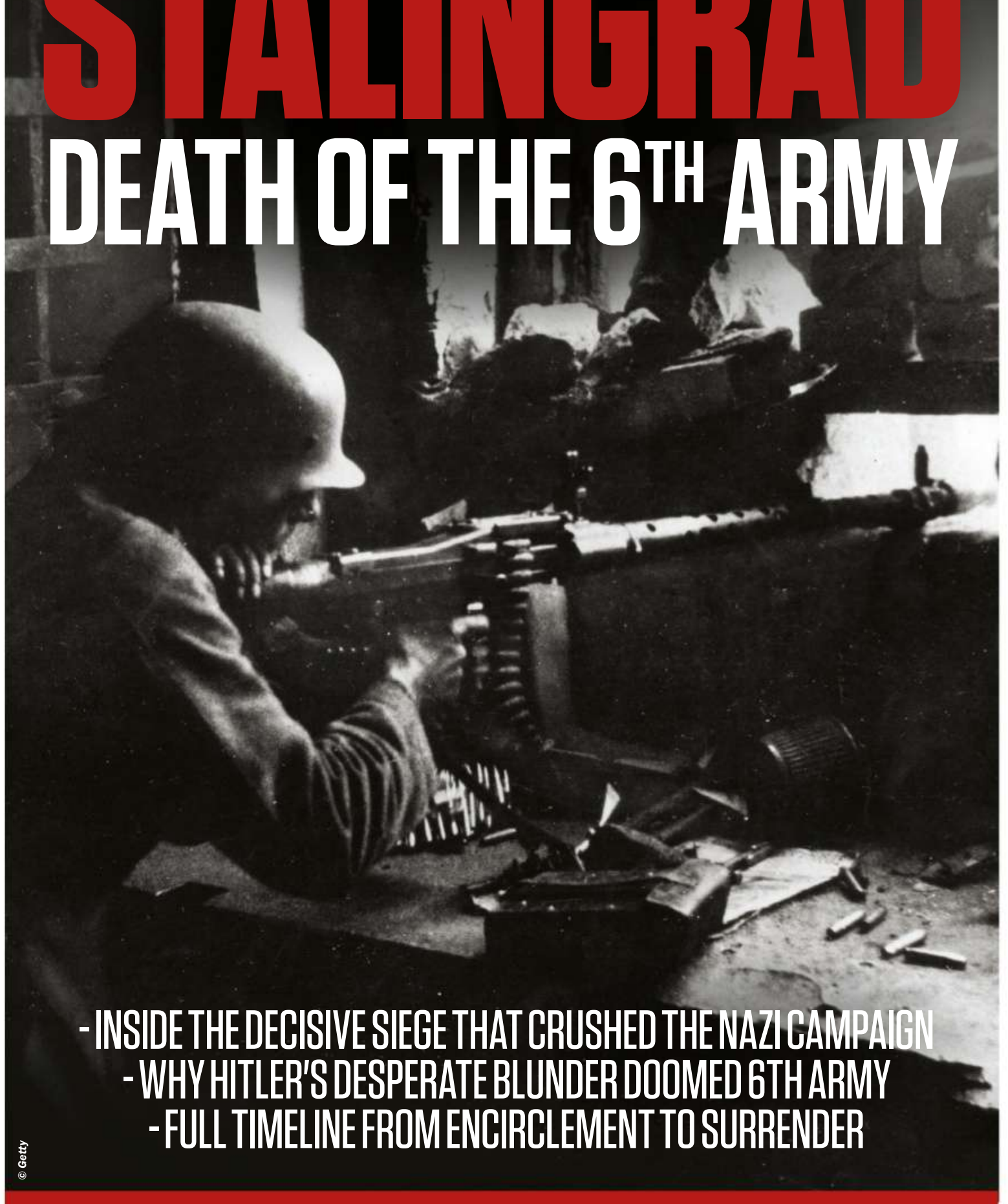
www.magazinesdirect.com/sun

or call 0330 333 1113 and quote SU22

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Offer closes 31st July 2022. Offer open to new subscribers only. After your trial issues, your subscription will continue at the price shown at the point of purchase. We will notify you in advance of any price changes. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. For full terms and conditions, visit magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries, please call: +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday-Friday 8:30am-7pm, Saturday 10am-3pm UK Time (excluding Bank Holidays) or email: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.

NEXT MONTH

STALINGRAD
DEATH OF THE 6TH ARMY



- INSIDE THE DECISIVE SIEGE THAT CRUSHED THE NAZI CAMPAIGN
- WHY HITLER'S DESPERATE BLUNDER DOOMED 6TH ARMY
- FULL TIMELINE FROM ENCIRCLEMENT TO SURRENDER

ON SALE 4 AUGUST

HISTORY OF WAR

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor-in-Chief **Tim Williamson**
timothy.williamson@futurenet.com
Senior Designer **Curtis Fermor-Dunman**
Features Editor **Tom Garner**
Production Editor **Iain Noble**
Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Contributors

Hareth Al Bustani, Alex Bowers, Stuart Hadaway, Michael E Haskew, Andrew Saunders, Jules Stewart, Anthony Tucker-Jones, Martin Wall, Josh West

Photography

Alamy, Rocio Espin, Nicholas Forder, Getty
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising

Media packs are available on request
UK Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Senior Advertising Manager **Matthew Johnston**
matthew.johnston@futurenet.com
07801 930735
Account Manager **Garry Brookes**
garry.brookes@futurenet.com
+44 020 3970 4176

International Licensing

History of War is available for licensing and syndication. To find our more contact us at licensing@futurenet.com or view our available content at www.futurecontenthub.com.
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com

Subscriptions

Subscription delays: Disruption remains within the UK and international delivery networks. Allow 7 days before contacting us about late delivery at **help@magazinesdirect.com**
UK orderline & enquiries **0330 333 1113**
Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 (0) 330 333 1113**
Online orders & enquiries **www.magazinesdirect.com**
Marketing Director, Magazines & Memberships **Sharon Todd**

Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Ben Oakden**

Production

Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Nola Cokely**

Management

Content Director **Gemma Lavender**
SVP Lifestyle, Knowledge & News **Sophie Wybrew-Bond**
Commercial Finance Director **Tom Swayne**
Managing Director **Sarah Rafati Howard**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9060

ISSN 2054-376X

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill holds full FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification and accreditation

All contents © 2022 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

History of War (ISSN 2054-376X) July, Issue 109, is published monthly with an extra issue in October by Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK The US annual subscription price is $171.60 Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc., c/o BBT 150-15 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Prices is Pending at Brooklyn NY 11256 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to History of War, World Container Inc., c/o BBT 150-15 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA Subscription records are maintained at Future Publishing, c/o Air Business Subscriptions, Rockwood House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH. UK

Widely Recycled

ipso. Regulated

FUTURE
Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive Chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief Financial Officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

THE YORK HELMET

This centuries-old piece of armour, one of only six known helmets from Anglo-Saxon Britain, is the most finely constructed and complete example in Europe

On May 12 1982 a remarkable and somewhat unexpected discovery was made ahead of building work in Coppergate, York. Excavations in the area, carried out by the York Archaeological Trust, had been completed a year earlier and, in the process, had shed greater light on the Viking city of Jorvik. However, in advance of the development of a local shopping centre, a mechanical excavator struck a solid object that later turned out to be a wood-lined pit. Within it was one of the best-preserved helmets to have survived Anglo-Saxon Britain, today known as the York Helmet.

Deliberately buried and partly deconstructed, the piece of armour, which is stylistically Northumbrian and dates back to the second half of the 8th century, has since been restored to its original state by the conservation department of the British Museum. It boasts numerous unique details, including the nose guard covered with intricately interlaced animals, the brass 'eyebrows' with animal-head terminals, and a Latin-inscribed copper alloy band that runs over and across the helmet's crest. A potential reference to its owner, most likely an important and powerful individual named Oshere, features in the inscription alongside Biblical messages. Additionally, its mail neck guard comprises some 1,947 rings.

The York Helmet – sometimes recognised as the Coppergate Helmet after where it was unearthed near the Jorvik Centre – is one of six known helmets from the era. The others include the famous Sutton Hoo Helmet (now at the British Museum), the Benty Grange Helmet (now in Weston Park Museum in Sheffield), and the Wollaston Helmet (on display in Leeds' Royal Armouries Museum).

The York Helmet's laborious production and elaborate design highlight the skill, creativity and artistry of the craftspeople working throughout the period, as well as revealing the considerable influence of Christianity on the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of early Medieval Britain. Perhaps above all else, the York Helmet is a symbol of the power, wealth and authority wielded by the elite ruling classes of the time.

Mechanical digger operator Andy Shaw helped unearth the York Helmet when his machine struck a wood-lined pit in 1982

Discovered alongside fragments of antler, stone, glass and iron, the dismantled helmet was reconstructed and restored to its original form

The York Helmet (shown here) and the Sutton Hoo Helmet both display a crest and hatched eyebrows that terminate in animal heads. The latter helmet depicts a winged creature

Yorkshire Museum

The York Helmet is part of the collection of the Yorkshire Museum. Opened in 1830, the institute was one of the earliest purpose-built museums in the country. It now houses galleries showcasing some of Britain's finest archaeological treasures from the city's Roman, Viking and medieval past.

www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk

All images © The Yorkshire Museum

TIGER I
SHERMAN FIREFLY VC

1:72 A50186

The mighty clash of armour which followed the successful Allied landings on the D-Day beaches of Normandy held the potential to determine the outcome of the war. This time, the dominance of the feared Tiger 1 would be challenged by rocket firing Typhoons from the air and a recently introduced Allied tank on the ground - although appearing outwardly similar to the standard Sherman at first glance, the 17-pounder anti-tank gun mounted on the 'Firefly' was more than capable of knocking out a Tiger. The Germans soon learned to look for the long barrelled Shermans first in any engagement and to make the Firefly a priority target, however, there were so many Shermans in Normandy that misidentification was highly likely and could prove fatal. The days of the mighty Tiger's dominance may have been numbered, but no Allied tank commander would relish the prospect of facing one in combat.

PZKPFW TIGER 1 AUSF E
Commanded by Michael Wittmann, schwere Panzer-Abteilung 101, Normandy, France, 1944.
Length 118mm Width 53mm Pieces 96

SHERMAN FIREFLY VC
Staffordshire Yeomanry, 27th Armoured Brigade, Operation Goodwood, Normandy, France, June 1944.
Length 110mm Width 37mm Pieces 88

Airfix.com
and all good retail stockists
YouTube

Start as you mean to finish
Humbrol™

Use your smartphone to find out more!

HORNBY HOBBIES
Official Product

WAR THUNDER

New?
GET YOUR
FREE
BONUS

9001

BECOME A PILOT YOURSELF!
WARTHUNDER.COM/FLY

Windows STEAM Mac oculus VIVE

PS4 XBOX ONE PS5 XBOX SERIES X|S

12
www.pegi.info

Gaijin ENTERTAINMENT

© 2009—2020 by Gaijin Entertainment.
All rights reserved.

9000